

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Kame Iwatani, 83, retired Del Monte Corporation  
(California Packing Corporation) field worker

Kame (Sakamoto) Iwatani, Japanese, was born on January 10, 1896, in Yamaguchi-ken, Japan. She has three brothers and four sisters. Her father was a farmer and occasional building contractor. As a girl, she helped on the family farm. She left school in 1908 after completing the compulsory six years.

In 1922, Kame left Japan for Hawaii to become the picture bride of Kumeiji Iwatani, a pineapple field worker. They settled in Kaaawa where Kame taught sewing to the children of the camp. In the following year, Kame started to work in the pineapple fields of Paumalu where her husband and brother-in-law had contracted to plant pineapples for the Fruits Company. That same year, she had the first of six children. In 1924, she moved to Waimea where she did the laundry for the Filipino workers of the Fruits Company and heated the ofuro for camp use. She later moved to Leilehua where she labored in the pineapple fields of the Fruits Company and again washed the clothes of other workers.

In 1929 when her husband was hired as a luna for the Leilehua fields of CPC [California Packing Corporation], Kame started cooking for the workers. She did this until 1939 when she again returned to field work. In 1941, she and her husband were transferred to Kunia (CPC) where she continued to do field work until the time of her retirement in 1961. For a short time during the 1940's, she also did housework for the plantation boss.

Kame is a grandmother and has been widowed since 1964. She enjoys gardening and watching Japanese-language television programs.

Tape No. 6-9-1-79

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Kame Iwatani (KI)

March 2, 1979

Kunia, Oahu

BY: Michiko Kodama (MK)

[Note: Interview was conducted in Japanese. Translation done by Michiko Kodama.]

MK: Interview with Mrs. Kame Iwatani on March 2, 1979 at her home in Kunia.

Mrs. Iwatani, when were you born?

KI: I was born in the twenty-ninth year of Meiji on the tenth day of January [January 10, 1896].

MK: Where is your homeland?

KI: My homeland is Yamaguchi-ken.

MK: Mrs. Iwatani, you were the second child in a 10-member family [which included your parents and your seven siblings]?

KI: Yes, I was.

MK: Mrs. Iwatani, was your family involved in agriculture [in Japan]?

KI: Yes, they were.

MK: Mrs. Iwatani, as a farmer, what kinds of work did you do?

KI: As a farmer, I did all kinds of work.

MK: Can you please explain that to me?

KI: Well, I planted the fields and this was the first or most important thing in agriculture. I weeded. After that, we harvested the rice. In the mountains, we planted and harvested sweet potatoes and raised silkworms. When we raised silkworms, we went out gathering mulberry. At times when it rained, we gathered and gathered mulberry, carried it, and ran with it any number of times as we returned from the fields. We crammed it into a room of this size [approximately 12 by 12 feet]. This is the type of work I did because I was a farmer.

MK: Did you do that about the time you were a child?

KI: From childhood time--from the time I was able to--about the time I was 12 or 13 years old. Yes. I used to carry it on my shoulders and go home.

MK: Before you came to Hawaii, did you do any other work besides agriculture?

KI: I didn't do anything special besides agriculture because it was agriculture all the way through. Yes.

MK: In agriculture did you always work with your family?

KI: Yes, I always worked with the family. Only at the really busy times did we hire someone. Especially at weeding time.

MK: Mrs. Iwatani, you came to Hawaii as a picture bride, didn't you?

KI: Yes, I came as a picture bride.

MK: How was it that you came here as a picture bride?

KI: Well, my husband's boss--the man who employed my husband--was a Yamaguchi-ken person. He came back and got me as a bride [for Mr. Iwatani] and arranged to send me to Hawaii.

MK: Mrs. Iwatani, why did you become a picture bride?

KI: Me? I wanted to come to Hawaii so badly. (Laughs)

MK: Why did you want to come to Hawaii?

KI: It was said that in Hawaii, you can earn money. Everybody used to return home after making money [in Hawaii]....when I was young. When I saw these people, I thought Hawaii had an inexhaustible amount of money. Everybody wanted to come to Hawaii so badly, but they couldn't go. As a woman, unless you were received as a bride, you couldn't come. With all this, I made up my mind and came.

MK: It must have took a lot of effort.

KI: Yes. Without courage you can't come.

MK: Why did you want money so badly?

KI: In Japan at about that time, we could not earn much money because everybody farmed. Well, when we raised silkworms we'd get loads of money because we sold the silkworm eggs. But other than the silkworm income, there was not much income so everybody wanted to come to Hawaii.

MK: With 10 in your family, were you in needy circumstances?

KI: Yes, we were in needy circumstances. Also my father could not stand on his feet. For seven years he had trouble with his legs--from about the time we [i.e., KI and a sibling] were 15 or 16 years of age, he had trouble with his legs--and the children were all small. And about that time, my mother was weak, too. So we fell into truly needy circumstances. To take care [of KI's father's leg] we needed money, but my father's leg did not get better with doctors' help.

My father frequently contracted the building of houses and other structures. Then, at about that time, a streetcar line was to start. To start the streetcar line, a road was to be built. So my father, together with other people (in the village), divided the road so that sections of the road, from here to there and from there to there, could be contracted by So-and-so and So-and-so. He contracted to do this type of work. At that time an Iwakuni person (i.e., a person from Iwakuni) next door contracted for some work. My father, having a lot of children and thinking that he could not afford to take a loss, transferred his contract to that [Iwakuni] person. That person made a huge profit.

Then, when my father couldn't stand on his legs, that person came to our house looking for my father. He found my father and figured if my father could not stand on his legs that much--that man was a very wealthy person--he said he didn't want any money. For other people, he said he charged 50 sen. There is the small ofuda--amulet--he gave [to KI's father], two of these. Some distance from our place was an ujigami shrine [shrine of the tutelary deity of the village].

He told my father, "Since you have trouble with your legs, take one of these amulets to the ujigami [tutelary deity of the village]--you don't have to go to the very top of the shrine steps, but go as far as the torii [sacred arch]. Go through the sacred arch, throw the amulet in, and without looking back, go around the sacred arch and don't look back until you return home." For that reason [to cure KI's father] he gave my father the amulet. Then, after that, my father got better.

With the other amulet.... In Japan each person is assigned his own ochawan [rice bowl]. He told my father to dig a hole isshaku [one Japanese foot] deep where the rain drops from the eaves and place the amulet there and cover it with his own rice bowl. From that time, he was cured. He returned to farming as before. Until that time [when he became ill] he farmed about one cho [2.45 acres], but he had to stop all this because he couldn't do it [because of his leg problems].

MK: Was your father cured from before you came to Hawaii?

KI: Yes, yes. Before I came, he was already well, and the children were grown.



MK: Mrs. Iwatani, right before you came, were things difficult financially?

KI: Before I came, things were hard financially. From about the time I was 17 years old, people came asking to have me as a bride. But I had three younger brothers--all in a row--and because I had three younger brothers, I felt until they became independent adults, I would help my mother and father. I decided this with my heart and I stayed at home until I was 26 years old.

MK: So that's why you remained at home until the age of 26.

KI: Since my younger brothers graduated from high school--all three of them--they could serve as helping hands at home, and if they did that, life would be easier for my mother and father. That is what I thought. And I decided to come to Hawaii.

MK: Since you were coming as a picture bride, what were your feelings on this?

KI: Since I already thought about myself as a picture bride, I wasn't that scared....myself. Nearby [in KI's village] there was a person returned from Hawaii. That person explained to me well. "When you go to Hawaii this is the way things are....there are some people who get killed as soon as they arrive in Hawaii....so you have to be careful," he said. This next-door person explained to me and made me listen often. So, I wasn't too scared. I stayed at the Immigration Bureau four or five nights. I didn't have a pillow or anything. [I was] just like a silkworm egg. I was made to sleep on a shelf. There were no pillows or anything. There was one blanket....at that time.

MK: This was in Honolulu?

KI: Yes. At the Immigration Bureau in Honolulu. So I rolled my obi [sash]--I rolled my sash around and around--I slept, removing my sash. I removed my sash, rolled it, and slept using it as a pillow. (Laughs)

MK: It sure sounds like Abashiri life [life at Abashiri prison--a prison notoriously known for the austere provisions given to prisoners].

KI: True. (Laughs)

MK: Before coming to Hawaii, what were your hopes [i.e., expectations]?

KI: Me? Before coming to Hawaii, what I hoped for was, naturally, money. Making money. And since I, myself, only went up to the sixth grade, for my children at least, I thought I would like to have them study hard. Work hard.

People used to ask me, "With what thoughts [i.e., plans] are you going to Hawaii?"

"I'm going to make money," is what I said, "by working."

MK: Did you think you would return to Japan after making your money in Hawaii?

KI: Yes, I thought I would return to Japan. In Japan I was told by other people, "Rather than going to a foreign country, isn't it better to marry here and see your mother's face once a year?" There were people who said that.

If I stayed in Japan, poor, I would remain poor, and this is no good. So I said, "I will go to Hawaii and rise [i.e., make a name] in the world." And I came to Hawaii. (Laughs)

MK: That's admirable.

(KI laughs)

MK: Before coming here, how much did you know about Hawaii?

KI: There was frequent talk about Hawaii. Many people often said it was such and such in the sugar cane fields.... "You carry the sugar cane; you do hapai ko. That is what you do." Other talk, I didn't hear too much. In the old days, people all came to the sugar fields as immigrants. As imported workers, more and more came. Since only sugar cane fields were known then--in the olden days--things were not so developed, and there was nothing in Hawaii. People, such as yourself, are still young so you are not even familiar with the war [World War II], right? It was truly only sugar cane fields.

MK: Mrs. Iwatani, hearing about the sugar cane fields, what were your thoughts about this?

KI: If it was a working and moneymaking venture, I thought anything would do. I came here with the willingness to do anything.

MK: Did you know about pineapple?

KI: I didn't know too much about pineapple. Since Mr. Iwatani's father was in Hawaii long ago, I was told that he lived in a pineapple-cultivating area, and that pineapple was a delicious thing. (Laughs)

MK: When did Mr. Iwatani's father say that?

KI: That was before I came. Before I came, I came to Hiroshima from Yamaguchi. There was some paperwork to do, right? During that time, I stayed eight months since the areas were a bit distant from each other. Yamaguchi and Hiroshima are close, but Mr. Iwatani was way inside--inland. It was a bit far so they said to check things out, it would take time and effort. So, eight months, I stayed at that place. At that time, Mr. Iwatani's father talked and told me.

MK: When you arrived in Honolulu in January of 1922, did you immediately marry Kumeiji Iwatani?

KI: When I landed, I stayed at the Immigration Bureau five days, right? I landed and got married without coming home to the country. At Honolulu [I got married] while staying at an inn. I stayed at the inn about two nights during that time. The next day, I got married.

MK: Did you get married at a church?

KI: Yes, at a church. I got married at a church.

MK: That first year, 1922, you didn't do any work?

KI: Yes. At that time, I did not work.

MK: Why is that?

KI: That time I still wasn't adapted [i.e., accustomed to things in Hawaii] and pretty soon, I gave birth, right? [KI had her first child in 1923.] So at about that time, I did not work.

MK: That first year, 1922, what were you doing?

KI: Me? Since coming to Hawaii? At the camp--it was a small camp--but there were 14 or 15 couples. At that time, they were all people from Okinawa prefecture. The oldest children were about 12 or 13 years old. I taught them sewing at the camp.

MK: What was the name of the camp?

KI: The camp's name.... They used the luna's name. My husband was the luna, so it was Iwatani Camp. In the olden days, it was that way.

MK: The Iwatani Camp, which company held it?

KI: Likewise, it was the Fruits Company [KI cannot remember the full name of the company]. It was the same company all through the years [or all through the area. The translator is unsure]. That company had any number of camps--small places.

MK: Where was that camp?

KI: Kaaawa. It was at Kaaawa.

MK: At that camp, you taught sewing?

KI: I taught sewing to the children while I was not in the fields.

MK: Where did you teach? At your home?

KI: At my home.

MK: How many students did you have?

KI: You ask how many students I had? There were few people. Among children who were of an age to learn sewing, there were only four or five....older ones.

MK: Were you teaching daily?

KI: I was teaching daily after school ended.

MK: About how many hours were you teaching?

KI: The usual days, they [i.e., sewing students] don't come that often.... (They came on Saturday and Sunday; they were in English language school the rest of the week.)

MK: What sorts of things were you teaching?

KI: Since it was being sewn here, summer kimono and other things. People here do not sew Japanese coats because they don't wear them, so just summer kimono [was sewn].

MK: How was your pay?

KI: At that time, pay, I wasn't receiving.

MK: Not even tuition?

KI: I wasn't receiving any. I didn't do that sort of thing. I was asked to teach and I said, "Yes." I taught because I was just playing then [i.e., not working]. (Laughs)

MK: Was it an enjoyable thing?

KI: Yes. It was enjoyable. There was a tailor nearby when I was young, so it was tailoring, I could sew anything....when I was young. Now, I'm no good because my eyes are weak and my hands don't work [i.e., move and respond]. (Laughs)

MK: Nineteen twenty-three was the first year that you went out and worked in the fields, right?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: For what reasons did you go out [in 1923] to work in the fields at Paumalu?

KI: That was our own [family] contracted field work.

MK: Can you please explain all this? Why did you go to Paumalu? Why did you place that land in agricultural production?

KI: The land was cleared and planted by my husband. (We leased the land, but I don't remember who we leased the land from. I know we didn't lease the land from the Fruits Company.) At that planted place, we placed my husband's younger brother [in charge] and my husband was luna elsewhere. [Interviewer's note: Earlier in the interview, the interviewer made an error in referring to Mr. Iwatani's younger brother as the oniisan or older brother. The correction has been made in the translation of the interview. All references made by the interviewer to the otōto as the oniisan or older brother have been changed to read younger brother in the English translation.]

At that place, the pineapple grew. While it was growing, they [the Fruits Company] lent us money because everybody borrows money and does this. People do not have the money and do it [themselves]. They borrow money from the Fruits Company and do it. So while it's [i.e., pineapples are] growing, they lend money. But if they see that maybe the fruit will not be growing [i.e., the plant was not growing properly], they do not lend money.

So, myself, my husband's younger brother, and Filipinos--four or six of them, because it's a small place--were there. But when the pineapple plant was about this high [KI positions her hand so that it appears that the pineapple was approximately 3 feet high] and a little after the flowers appeared, the pineapple wilted--the leaves turned red. [The interviewer suspects that this was the mealy bug blight per telephone conversation with Dr. Kenneth Rohrbach of the Pineapple Research Institute.] The company stopped putting out money.

Until that time, I went out to the fields and worked the pulapula [slip] that you had--that's called pulapula. I peeled it, placed it in bags. (I did this while taking care of my child. I placed my baby in a wagon in the field. It was difficult to work and baby-sit at the same time because the baby would cry off and on. I carried the baby on my back, too.) And planting? There, the Filipinos planted it [i.e., slip]. [See diagram section in Introduction.]

MK: The land, was it Mr. Iwatani's property?

KI: The land, too, was leased. It wasn't your own land. It was leased and you rented it. [Mr. Iwatani rented the land.]

MK: The Fruits Company lent money to Mr. Iwatani; and Mr. Iwatani, Mr. Iwatani's younger brother, yourself, the Filipino workers, and your husband's younger brother's wife all worked together?

KI: Yes, yes. We worked together.

MK: Can I have you explain more about the work you did there?

KI: As expected, such things as weeding was done. When you plant that pulapula [KI points to the slip brought by the interviewer], before you plant it, you peel it.

MK: At that time, you peeled the pulapula?

KI: Yes, we were peeling it.

MK: Can you explain more about peeling [the slip]?

KI: Peeling? (Laughs)

MK: Yes. Peeling while holding this [the dried slip.]

KI: You hold it this way and peel it this way.... [KI is holding the slip by the leaves near the root of the slip and is peeling away the covering near the root while rotating the slip.]

MK: All the bottom leaves [you remove]?

KI: The dried ones.... You would never be able to peel this one because the roots are already out. You can peel it real quickly, but because there's this head [root], it cannot be peeled quickly.

MK: Do you remove the head?

KI: Yes, you cut this head and then peel it. If you rotate it, it is peeled immediately.

MK: So you pick the pulapula [slips], dry it, and peel it?

KI: Yes, yes. And after you peel it, you dry it again--standing it up this way [leaves down, root end up]. You stand it up all like this [KI demonstrates] and count it.

MK: How many do you count? In 5's or 10's? Or...

KI: The count....by 10's [i.e., bunches of 10 slips]. And stand it up. Since there are many, you crowd them together and pack them [i.e., bunches of 10 slips] in 100's. And then, you, yourself, remember how many 100's you peeled. When you make a hundred, you place a piece of opala [rubbish] on the side, like this place [to represent a hundred slips], or else you'd forget, right?

MK: By using the opala, you count?

KI: When you stand a hundred, you place this one here [KI places opala on the coffee table].

MK: You peel and pack a hundred pulapula and leave one opala on the side?

KI: Yes. (Laughs) So then, later, when you count this [KI touches the opala], you know how many 100's you have.

MK: That's a good idea.

(Laughter)

- KI: Some men have pockets in their aprons. There are some people who take one opala and place it in their pockets. Also, some people pull out one leaf from the pulapula after they've made 100, and place it in their pocket. When they go out to the roadside, they count the leaves.
- MK: These people, instead of using the opala, pull here [the leaf] and place it in the pocket?
- KI: This [leaf] comes out easily if it wasn't dried and if you pull it. Everybody used his own idea and did it accordingly. People did it that way.
- MK: What kinds of other work did you do?
- KI: Other work in pineapple....hoe-hana. At that time, there was no spray, so we did not spray [i.e., spray insecticides and/or hormones]. Nowadays, they spray more and more so the pineapples grow. They spray insecticides so the insects die. At that time, there was no spray or anything.
- MK: Were you giving fertilizer?
- KI: Fertilizer? We were administering it.
- MK: Were you, Mrs. Iwatani, administering the fertilizer?
- KI: While we were contracting pineapple, I did not administer fertilizer. The Filipinos used to do it.
- MK: Mrs. Iwatani, were you planting pineapple?
- KI: Me? No. While we were contracting pineapple, I did not plant it.
- MK: So, while contracting, you were stripping slips...
- KI: Picking slips, stripping the opala from the slips, standing the slips up, and after these were dried, I placed them in bags to be taken to the fields.
- MK: Who took it [bags of slips] to the fields?
- KI: That was taken by wagon. Do you know what wagons are? Drawn by horses. In olden days, there were no truckers in the country, so they were taken by horses, and things were done that way. The slips were loaded onto horse-drawn wagons, taken to the fields, distributed, and then they were planted.
- MK: But you, Mrs. Iwatani, did not plant?
- KI: No, I did not plant at our field.



MK: So, at the time of contracting, you were just slip-making and doing hoe-hana?

KI: Yes, yes. That was about it.

MK: In slip-making, do you use tools?

KI: During slip-making, no, no. We hemo [remove the leaves from the slips] by hand.

MK: When you remove this root portion of the slip... [Interviewer points to the nub of the slip.]

KI: Oh, this....this is cut with a knife.

MK: Did you buy the knife yourself and use it?

KI: No, it was provided by the company.

MK: When you did hoe-hana...

KI: Hoes and everything else were the company's property.

MK: What sorts of machinery were used at that time?

KI: At that time--at the pineapple fields where we were staying--Paumalu was a small place, so everything was done by horses. Even to plow the fields, the horses pulled and the ground was plowed. In the olden days, they didn't have the large machines available today. It was small, too, the field.

MK: You said that the field was small. Just how small was the field?

KI: Oh....I wonder how many acres there were? I guess there were about 10 acres. If it was a level place, it would have been good, but there were all areas that were just hills. So even if we had machines, we could not put them in there.

MK: There were hills and valleys, and machinery could not be used?

KI: That's right, that's right. So, naturally, you had to do it with horses.

MK: The horses and wagons, were these provided by the company?

KI: Yes. Well, it was the same as the company providing the horses and the wagons. Even if we spent money on the horses and spent money on the wagons, it's the same as the company providing them because we borrowed the money from the company. Because we, ourselves, do not use our own money for the fields. In the old days, everybody did it that way, all the contractors. So the people who sold the pineapples to the company when the fruits were just forming made a profit. They made money.

MK: Did you and your husband lose money?

KI: Yes, we did lose money.

MK: Do you know why you failed?

KI: That.... I think it was the land. Since rain was scarce, the land bad, and its location way up in the mountains....it was mountainous, not a level place like this, so it must have been the land.

MK: If the land was that bad, why did you begin it in the first place?

KI: In the beginning, you don't know that until you plant and see. We started because he [KI's husband] went to see the mountain and felt that if it was here, it might be a good place for pineapple.

MK: Did the Fruits Company approach Mr. Iwatani [for contracting], or did Mr. Iwatani approach the company?

KI: From Mr. Iwatani's side....he said he'd like to do this and this and contract, and he asked. From before the time I came, the field there [at Paumalu] had been started. Since the time I came, that side was becoming a waste of time, so we got rid of that place. In short, we closed the books [on the place]. Better to let go of the place early, right? And the company wasn't lending any more money. It's a waste of time holding onto that place forever, right?

MK: You said that for workers, there were Mr. Iwatani, Mr. Iwatani's younger brother, Mr. Iwatani's younger brother's wife, and four or six Filipino workers [the interviewer failed to mention KI]. How were the relations among all of these workers?

KI: For the workers, we paid off their pay until that time, and since we told them we were quitting this place, those people.... Next door to the place, there was Hawaiian Pine--today's Dole. Since there was that company on that side--if you walked a little, crossed over the mountain, it was just above--everyone got a job again and went there.

MK: Were the Filipino workers receiving their pay from your husband?

KI: Yes, yes. That's so.

MK: Mr. Iwatani was borrowing the money from the Fruits Company and paying the Filipino workers from that sum?

KI: Yes, yes, yes. That's so.

MK: Mrs. Iwatani, Mr. Iwatani's younger brother, Mr. Iwatani's younger brother's wife--all of you--where were you all getting your pay?

KI: Likewise, from the sum gotten from the Fruits Company. So, when we lost [financially], it didn't affect us that much. The company

lost out because the pineapple was not harvested (and we did not have to repay the sum advanced by the Fruits Company). That company was not big like Dole [Hawaiian Pineapple Company] and CPC [California Packing Corporation], so it collapsed.

MK: How were relations among the workers? Yourself, Mr. Iwatani's brother's wife, and the Filipino workers were all working together, right?

KI: Yes, we were working together. Our relationship....no special problems. Even though they were Filipinos, if you are good to them, they are good to you. If you are bad to them, they are bad to you. Humans are mutually that way.

MK: While working with them, were there times when you conversed with the Filipino workers?

KI: Yes, there were. We conversed daily. (Laughs)

MK: What topics did you talk about?

KI: Gee, the things we talked about.... (Laughs) We talked about our opinions; we talked about pineapple; we talked about amusing and interesting things. That's how you get along together with the Filipino workers. I didn't have any conflicts with the Filipino workers.

MK: Mrs. Iwatani, you speak in Japanese. How did you converse with the workers?

KI: I conversed in our Islands' hapago [Japanese pidgin]. Bit by bit, we communicated.

MK: At that time, who was the person serving as the luna?

KI: The person serving as the luna was my husband's younger brother.

MK: How were your relations with your brother-in-law as he worked as the luna.... What kind of luna was he?

KI: Nothing special occurred between him and the Filipinos. He treated the people as employees.

MK: What kind of work did your brother-in-law do as the luna?

KI: The luna's actual work is to, well, make other people work.

MK: Is that what he was doing?

KI: Yes.

MK: Did he, himself, also work [i.e., engage in field work]?

KI: He, himself, did do work if there were things to do there. Generally, whoever is luna is, the competent luna is the one who can make the people work without berating them.

MK: Was your brother-in-law a capable luna?

KI: He was so-so....fairly capable. (Laughs)

MK: Why do you say "so-so?"

KI: Because he somehow managed. Also, [he supervised] without getting into conflict with the workers. Since the other side are the Filipino workers and they don't restrain their anger, the luna has to be capable to avoid fights.

MK: Were there instances of fights?

KI: There were none.

MK: At Paumalu, when you went to work in the pineapple fields [contracted by Mr. Iwatani], how did you know that you were to do certain things at the field?

KI: I had it taught to me.

MK: Who taught you?

KI: My husband....because my husband had been in pineapple from way back. At that time, it was not his first time. "This, you do this way. That, you do that way." The luna teaches you all this.

MK: So, your husband and your husband's younger brother went out to the fields and explained?

KI: Yes, yes. In that way, they teach you.

MK: The women wear all sorts of clothing, right? How did you know that you were to wear a certain type of clothing and go out to work? Who told you?

KI: That? Everyone's wearing it, right? So, I saw it, sewed it, and made it. Even tabis, I sewed it myself. In the old days, we did not use shoes. We used tabis. We sewed it ourselves. For tabis, I had it taught to me that you sew it this way.

MK: Who was teaching you?

KI: Mr. Iwatani's younger brother's wife. That person was a Kauai-born. Since she was born here [in Hawaii], she knew all--what sorts of things we have to do to work.

MK: Did Mr. Iwatani's younger brother's wife have experience in pine work?

- KI: At that time, until she came there, she did not have experience because at Kauai, it was sugar cane production.
- MK: But she knew about that [i.e., clothing in fields]?
- KI: Yes, yes. Sewing tabis and other things, she knew.
- MK: At that time, what were you wearing from the top of your head to your feet? Can you please explain to me?
- KI: (Laughs) On top of the head, you have a wheat straw hat. Under that, a square cloth [scarf] similar to a furoshiki [a cloth wrapper] with the front folded under so that not too much of the face is exposed--the face from here was all covered [KI touches her forehead, her cheeks, and her chin]. It was worn this way and secured in back [KI demonstrates].
- MK: Just the eyes and nose...
- KI: Yes, just the eyes and nose and mouth were exposed. So, who's who, you can't quite tell. Truly. Then, a shirt like that [KI points to the interviewer's shirt].
- MK: A long-sleeved shirt?
- KI: Yes, a long-sleeved shirt--I wore that. On top of that, I pulled on a hakama [a pleated culottelike skirt].
- MK: Was it a Japanese-style hakama?
- KI: No, no. It wasn't a Japanese-style hakama.... I guess here it was called "slacks." That, I had it made in cotton. Everything was cotton.
- MK: How about the shirt?
- KI: The shirt was also cotton. It was goban jima [checkerboard striped material]. Even now, it is available. Nowadays, the shirts that we used to wear way back then are popular.
- MK: Palaka shirt, it's called?
- KI: No. Palaka shirt, no. (Laughs)
- MK: Was it different? It [palaka shirt] has squarelike prints.
- KI: There were squared stripes going lengthwise and crosswise. Even now, they have it, even in red.
- MK: That is called palaka.
- KI: Oh, is that so? I didn't know that. With that material, all our shirts were made.

MK: Was that hakama made from that material too?

KI: No, the hakama was different. The hakama was made from--in the old days, they used to have a material known as "Indian"--we made it with that because it's thick. In the pineapple [fields], there are thorns on the backside of the pineapple leaves. [KI holds the interviewer's pineapple slip and shows her where the thorns are located.] So, if the material is a little thick, it [thorns] would not penetrate all the way. And on the legs, there were kyahan [leggings]. You made a squarelike thing about this size [KI traces a 12 by 12 inch figure] and placed trim at the borders of the cloth, wound it about your leg and secured the trimming, and went to work that way.

MK: How about your feet?

KI: Feet? They were covered so that nothing was exposed. Because I was wearing tabi.

MK: Were you wearing gloves?

KI: Yes, gloves, too.

MK: What kinds of gloves?

KI: When I picked slips, I wore leather gloves. Even now, they have leather gloves, right? It was all that.

MK: When you did hoe-hana...

KI: When I did hoe-hana, it was with cloth [gloves]. There were sewn ones and bought ones. There's ahina, right? The black ones [i.e., gloves], we used to sew with that.

MK: Were you sewing all of your clothes?

KI: Clothing? I used to sew all.

MK: Where were you getting the material from?

KI: The material was purchased from stores.

MK: Was there a camp store?

KI: Yes, there was a store at the camp. Even though I say "camp"---at my camp, there wasn't a store, but when you go below our camp (which was located up in the mountains), a person from the store used to come way back into the mountain to take orders. I ordered from that person and bought even foodstuffs and all. In one month he came about two times. In the old days, it was all like that. Nowadays, there aren't people walking around to take orders, right? In the old days, they used to go house to house to take orders.

Once every two weeks or once a week. The ones that came regularly came once a week. That's how everyone made purchases, even foodstuffs.

MK: Were you sewing your clothes on a machine?

KI: Yes, I sewed with a machine.

MK: I'm returning to the topic of work. How many hours did you work?

KI: At that time, it was 10 hours.

MK: From what time to what time?

KI: Ten hours? Ten hours, starting from 7 o'clock [a.m.]. How many hours would I have to work to make 10 hours? From 7 o'clock, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 o'clock [p.m.].

MK: Did you have rest periods?

KI: Since our rest period was 30 minutes, pau hana was 5:30 [p.m.]. I rested 30 minutes for lunch.

MK: For lunch, what sorts of things did you eat?

KI: Lunch? People brought food according to what each felt like eating-- by individual taste. Like cooked vegetables, eggs. People who liked meat brought meat. All sorts of things were brought. With everybody together, the food was placed in front of each other. I'd eat some of your food, and you'd eat some of my food that was different. We did that and ate.

MK: Did the Filipino workers eat with you, too?

KI: No, no. They didn't.

MK: So, it was just yourself, Mr. Iwatani's younger brother, and Mr. Iwatani's younger brother's wife?

KI: Yes, that is so.

MK: What did you do during your lunch period?

KI: Ate, sat and talked. Those who wanted to sleep had aprons there. There were these waterproof aprons that did not get wet even when it rained. There were those people who spread the aprons out and slept.

MK: Mrs. Iwatani, did you sleep?

KI: I didn't sleep. (Laughs)

MK: Who was sleeping?



KI: A person named Mitsuyuki used to sleep often.

MK: Who was that person?

KI: She is now in a hospital and cannot speak. So, she's not well.  
[Mrs. Mitsuyuki was a CPC worker at Kunia.]

MK: Was she working at Paumalu?

KI: No, no. She wasn't working at Paumalu. I've never fallen asleep because there were only two others--my brother [KI's husband's younger brother] and brother's wife. We just talk--talk about children, etc., because they had children.

MK: Your working hours--during that time--can you converse with others?

KI: Yes, we can.

MK: When you do hoe-hana or pick slips...

KI: Even during hoe-hana, we talk.

MK: I'm going to ask you about your wages. At that time, how much were you receiving? [Although the fields were contracted by her husband, KI, like others who worked in the fields, received wages from her husband.]

KI: At that time, one hour was 10 cents.

MK: Ten cents an hour? Was there contract work [i.e., piecework]?

KI: When you did contract work, the pay got to be [i.e., increased to] \$2. If you say \$2, it's 20 cents per hour because it's 10 hours a day. It's doubled, right?

MK: In contract work, you pick a thousand slips and get so many cents?

KI: Yes, yes. You pick slips and count it, and it's set so that maybe a hundred slips is equal to 50 cents.

MK: At Paumalu, did you do that sort of thing?

KI: At Paumalu, since there were only two of us [KI and her sister-in-law], we just did what we could.

MK: It wasn't contract work?

KI: Yes, yes. It wasn't contract work.

MK: By hour instead?

KI: We worked just by the hour [received an hourly wage].

MK: Even hoe-hana work was paid by the hour?

KI: Yes, yes. Hoe-hana was by the hour, too.

MK: Was the pay for men's work and the pay for the work you and your sister-in-law did, different? Different between men's and women's?

KI: They were different. At that time, they were different.

MK: How much different were they?

KI: Well, per hour, it differed about five cents.

MK: So, Mrs. Iwatani, you received 10 cents...

KI: Ten cents, and men received 15 cents. My husband was receiving a salary because lunas received salaries. At that time, I believe he was receiving about \$70 [per month].

MK: At that time, your husband was working for the Fruits Company. He was a luna?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: But he wasn't doing that [serving as luna] at Paumalu?

KI: Yes, yes. Because his brother was present [at Paumalu].

MK: For a company employing Filipinos, Hawaiians, and Japanese, were the wages different [for different ethnic groups]?

KI: No, it was the same for everybody--even Hawaiians, haoles, whatever--as long as you do the same work.

MK: What were your feelings while working at Paumalu? What did you think about this work?

KI: As I said, if there was a chance of success, it was all right to work....to continue doing it. But if there was no chance of success, it was better to give up. That is what I said [to KI's husband]. Then, we gave up. Nothing will happen if you sit forever at a good-for-nothing [unproductive] place. Because the pineapples didn't mature. At the end, you'll end up starving.

MK: Were you still getting paid?

KI: Yes, we were receiving pay up to the time we were at that place.

MK: Did you enjoy the work at that time? What were you thinking about that work?

KI: Until that time, we tried our best, hoping to make a profit. But for pineapples to mature, it cannot be done in two or three weeks,

right? The quickest the pineapple can mature is one year and eight months. And then finally, a fruit appears. Depending on the planting material, pineapples that take longer to mature take two years. Then finally, a pineapple fruit appears. So in the old days, if the pineapple does not wilt, a fruit appears. But when the pineapple wilts, a fruit does not appear. When we looked at the fields, the pineapple plants were all red, and the company could not lend us money. So, we gave up there, quit, and left.

MK: The first time you went out [onto the fields], what did you think?

KI: To work? (Laughs) Since I was a farmer from the start--from when I was young--I didn't think anything of farming. If I had been raised as a fine lady and I came out to the fields, I'd think, "Uhhh." Since I was a farmer, I came prepared for it in Japan. No matter what type of work, I was prepared for it at the time of my coming to Hawaii. I came with the resolution to work. I did things with the willingness to do anything, so it [the field work] did not affect me that much.

MK: The next year was 1924. Mr. Iwatani was working at the Fruits Company place in Waimea?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: Your husband was a luna then. Did you go to Waimea because Paumalu failed?

KI: That's so, that's so.

MK: Did your husband ask to go?

KI: Yes, he asked. He went there to look for work. A Pake was the luna there at that place in the beginning.

MK: How did he get a job at Waimea?

KI: Since we were contracting here [Paumalu] and quit it. "Can we have jobs here?" we asked the Pake.

MK: Did you go [and ask]?

KI: Uh huh. Oh, no. I didn't go. My husband went first. At that time, when we quit and left--when we left Paumalu--my husband and his brother together, at Waimea, were renting a house. Then, he went to the Fruits Company and got work [at Waimea]. Then, we [all] moved there.

MK: Did the Fruits Company have a camp [at Waimea]?

KI: There was.

MK: Did you move into the camp?

KI: Yes, yes. We moved. We were located at the foot of a mountain, and the Fruits Company fields were located on top of that mountain.

MK: What was the name of the camp?

KI: I don't remember well the name of the camp....what they called it. I don't remember.

MK: The Pake...

KI: In the beginning, the Pake was serving as luna.

MK: Was the camp called by the Pake's name?

KI: Generally, in the old days at a small camp like that, they called it [the camp] by the name of the luna there--Something-something Camp. Then generally, it was known by the people.

MK: I'm returning to the topic of Paumalu for a short while. What camp were you living in while working at Paumalu?

KI: At Paumalu? Camp? There were any number of houses above there.

MK: Did the Fruits Company own the houses?

KI: My husband went there and built them. When he cleared the land, even the houses, he built himself.

MK: Near the fields, he, himself, built them?

KI: Near the fields. Yes, yes. He built them.

MK: The company provided the funds?

KI: Money? They provided. That's so, that's so.

MK: I'm returning to the topic of Waimea again. Why did you again work? Did you work because you needed money?

KI: Without money, of course, can't eat--must earn money.

MK: If you didn't work, you can't eat?

KI: Cannot eat, right. Even the money that we had went out from the side [on various expenses]. So, for at least eating, we must work--here or in Japan, it's the same. So feeling that no matter what, this is no good [i.e., contracting at Paumalu is unprofitable] and work must be found elsewhere, we looked for and found work at the Fruits Company.

MK: At Waimea, what kind of work were you doing?

KI: My husband, in the beginning, he was using a horse--he was a teamster.

MK: How about yourself?

KI: Me? I wasn't working at Waimea. I was doing the Filipino workers' laundry at that time without going out to [work in] the fields.

MK: In 1924, at Waimea, you didn't go out to [work in] the fields at all?

KI: Yes, I didn't go out to [work in] the fields at all. I was doing the Filipino workers' laundry and heating the ofuro everyone used.

MK: Can you explain all that? How you did this laundry?

KI: There were the Filipino workers who worked there. The Filipinos of the old days were bachelors and had others to do their laundry. So for the 5 or 10 men--that place was a small camp, too--I think there were just 10 men, Filipinos. I was doing their laundry at home because I had children. There were little children.

MK: How did you find this work?

KI: Laundry? The Filipinos asked me to do it. "Won't you do laundry?" they asked. In the old days, it was that way.

Then I said, "Oruraitto [i.e., All right]," in Hawaii's language, ✓ and it was understood by the other side. (Laughs)

MK: Mrs. Iwatani, you were doing the laundry of 15 men? [The interviewer made an error. The correct number is 10.]

KI: Yes, that's so, and I was heating the ofuro at that time. At that place.

MK: The laundry work, were you doing it by hand?

KI: By hand. In the old days, there was the washing board. I was doing it all with that. In one week, they [i.e., Filipino workers] gathered and put their laundry out one time a week. I washed that and ironed it. And the next week, they were supposed to bring it again.

MK: Oh, once a week, once a week?

KI: Yes, once a week, once a week.

MK: About how much money were you receiving?

KI: At that time, I wonder how much it was? It was cheap.... How much was it at about that time? It must have been about \$5 or \$6. I don't think it was as high as \$10 at that time, per month.

MK: You were receiving about \$5 from each person?

KI: Yes, yes. About \$5 per month from each person in the old days.

MK: Did you think it was good pay at that time?

KI: Yes. At that time, the profit was slim. The Filipinos, too, were only making \$25 or \$30 [per month]. There are only 30 days [per month] and so they only have \$30--if it's one day, \$1.

MK: Which was better, pineapple work or laundry work?

KI: If I can go out to the fields, that is more leisurely to do work.

MK: Why is that?

KI: In field work, you don't have to finish a certain amount of work [during a certain period of time]. They don't decide--you, you have to do this much. It's all right if you do as much as you can, even when you hoe-hana. In laundry work, no matter how much there is to do, you have to finish it no matter what. So, field work is more leisurely.

MK: In laundry work, how much time did you take in a week?

KI: A week's laundry, it took about two days to wash when you washed for 10 people. After that, ironing takes time, too. Ironing takes about two or three days. I had work all through the week.

MK: In ironing, did you do it with an electric iron?

KI: No. If there was electricity, it [work] would have been good. But in the old days, it was charcoal. Charcoal--sumi. That you heat up and iron. Like nowadays, with electricity, you can do the ironing very quickly. In the old days, I had to heat up the coals, fan it with a fan, heat up the coals, and then with that, do the ironing. The people of old really suffered. Now, it's really a wealthy man's life. When I think about our times, truly, today's people are in paradise.

MK: You were also tending the ofuro?

KI: Yes, I was also tending the ofuro that everyone used.

MK: Can you explain a bit more about that work?

KI: Just....tending the ofuro was putting the water in the ofuro. I put the water in by drawing it in a bucket.

MK: Was it [water source] far away?

KI: No, it was near. There was a large ditch in which there was a tank. Next door was a sugar producer because there were sugar cane

fields. That water [from the sugar cane fields] came flowing in. I drew that water and put it in the ofuro.

MK: Were you doing it all alone?

KI: Yes, I draw the water, put it in, and then heat the ofuro. Then everyone uses it.

MK: To heat the coals, the firewood...

KI: The firewood was the leftover from the sugar cane because next door to us were sugar cane fields. Sugar cane leftovers....not leftovers, but something they picked up from the fields--the shells of the sugar cane.

MK: Who gathered that?

KI: That was the company. From the other side, [they gathered it]. It was piled up in a mound. With that I heated the ofuro.

MK: In tending the ofuro, what time to what time did you tend it?

KI: All I have to do is heat it by evening time. Just that and it's okay. With that everyone can get in [the ofuro].

MK: Does it take about an hour to heat it?

KI: Well, it does take about an hour. I would heat from a certain time, and it would be ready by pau hana time. In the old days, there was a large box-type ofuro.

MK: So, you went to the ofuro area by about 3:30 p.m.?

KI: Yes, I went about 3:30 and heated the ofuro. The ofuro place was right nearby, so.... And I had a child--a young child. Katsue [KI's daughter] was small yet, then. So I didn't go out to work in the fields, and instead, did that type of work.

MK: In tending the ofuro, who paid you?

KI: The Filipinos paid.

MK: About how much were you receiving?

KI: Gee, I wonder how much I was receiving? Thirty cents per month. It was about 30 cents per month for each person.

MK: Was it just for the Filipino workers?

KI: Yes. Just for the Filipino workers. There were no Japanese there except for us. The remainder was a Pake--a Pake couple. The Pake did not use the ofuro.



(Laughter)

MK: Were you doing that [ofuro tending] on a daily basis?

KI: Yes, daily.

MK: How was tending the ofuro.... Did you consider it a good job?

KI: Yes.... I didn't have that many things to do, and I had to make some money.

MK: From 1925, you stayed again with the Fruits Company at Leilehua for about four years. What were you doing then?

KI: At Leilehua, during season time, there was the job of packing the pineapples in the boxes. The Filipino workers picked the pineapples, placed them outside [the pineapple rows], and I packed the pineapples into boxes and walked [row side to row side]. There was that work. When that work was not available, I did laundry work, sewing for the Filipino workers.

MK: Why did you move to Leilehua?

KI: The Fruits Company sent us. The Fruits Company asked my husband to go to Leilehua. At that time, I had just given birth to Hisae [KI's daughter]. Not many days had passed since her birth. Two weeks--two weeks since giving birth--I moved [to Leilehua]. The boss came and said to me, "If it is too soon to move after giving birth, later on I will take you there [Leilehua]. So please allow your husband to go ahead."

I said, "No. If my husband is going, I, too, can go even if not many days have passed since giving birth. I'll go." I went together with my husband. The camp was in Leilehua, and we were going from Waimea to Leilehua, so it was far.

MK: What was the name of the camp [at Leilehua]?

KI: The camp's name.... A person named Saito-san was a contractor. So we called it Saito Camp. Because the boss was called Saito, we said, "Saito Camp." That [place] was operating by borrowing money from the Fruits Company.

MK: He was operating the camp the way Mr. Iwatani used to contract before?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: From 1925 to 1929, you worked in the pineapple fields during the season time. During the season time, you packed pineapples into the boxes...

KI: Yes, yes. I packed the pineapples into the boxes.

MK: Can you explain to me how you packed the pineapples into the boxes?

KI: There are thick pineapples and small pineapples. No matter what box---boxes were about this size, about one-half of this [approximately 15 inches by 20 inches as indicated by KI's hand motions]. Six pineapples fit into that box. You put six on the bottom and six on the top. And just about so, it gets filled. You must fill the box to its capacity or it is not acceptable. Then, the ones you filled--the boxes you filled first--you stack them up and leave them. Then, a trucker comes to get the boxes.

MK: You needn't pick up the boxes yourself?

KI: I don't have to pick up the boxes.

MK: The workmen brought out the pineapples to you?

KI: The workmen picked the pineapples and came out of the fields. Then there are roads, right? At one place on the road, they make a big pile of pineapples. There the truck comes and leaves the boxes. We take those boxes and pack the pineapple--generally, six. There are those that can be filled with 12 [pineapples] and then there are those that can be filled with 10 [pineapples]. [The number of pineapples in a box depends on the size of the pineapples.] Fill up one box, then stack an empty box on top of that filled box. Fill it up and continue stacking until you can't reach. Stack it, and the truck again comes to get the boxes.

MK: How did you learn this job?

KI: This job, from the beginning, I knew how to do it. So, from the time I was at Kaaawa, it was pineapple [work].

MK: But at Kaaawa, did you do that work?

KI: No, at Kaaawa, I didn't do that work, but by looking, I knew how to do it. (Laughs)

MK: So, you were like a minarai [i.e., observing apprentice]?

KI: Yes, as a minarai. (Laughs)

MK: In that box-filling job, how many worked with you?

KI: At my time, it was three--three women.

MK: These women, who were they?

KI: Ah, those people.... One of the women was an old woman, much, much older than myself. She was Japanese. But that person passed away very early. The other person, she wasn't that different from me in terms of age--maybe a little, two to three years older than myself. But that person is no longer around, having gone back to Japan.

MK: How about the third person?

KI: Oh. There were three people, including myself.

MK: Besides that work, what other work did you do?

KI: Other work at the fields? When it was about time to plant, I stripped the plant material [i.e., slips]. That, at a large clear area--an open area--they bring more and more of the planting material [i.e., slips] in with trucks.

MK: Did you have to pick [the planting material], or did someone else pick?

KI: No, the Filipino workers picked. The ones [planting material] that the Filipino workers picked were brought from the fields to the open area. Then we go there and peel [the planting material]. Peel and pile these up to be counted as contract work [i.e., piecework]. That was the work.

MK: Was it done the same the way as the Paumalu time?

KI: Did it the same way.

MK: Were you receiving pay for this by contract [i.e., piecework]?

KI: Yes, by contract [i.e., piecework]. When we peel this [planting material], it was always by contract.

MK: How about when you packed the boxes?

KI: Packing [pine into] boxes, too, was contract [i.e., piecework].

MK: How much were you receiving for packing the boxes?

KI: The salary? The salary was.... How much was it? Ah, one cent or two cents, I think. Fill up this box, one, and [receive one cent or two cents].

MK: Oh, how about the slips?

KI: This [KI handles a slip], I wonder how much it was at that time? I did about 3,000 of these and was receiving about \$2.

MK: To do 3,000 [slips], how much time did it require?

KI: One day.

MK: Was it 10 hours [a day]?

KI: Yes. Ten hours. And because we got \$2 for that [i.e., slip-making]---daywork is \$1, right? To work. We used to go home happily, having made \$2.

(Laughter)

KI: I remember that. (Laughs)

MK: How many boxes did you complete filling in a day?

KI: When I packed the boxes, well, about 70 or 80.

MK: So in one day, you made 80 cents?

KI: Yes, it was about that much.

MK: In slip-making, were you doing it with the two other women?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: How were your relations among the three of you?

KI: Among the three of us, there were no particular problems. We all worked cooperatively. In total, I've been living here 60 years, right? I've never fought with a person. I've never disliked a person and refused to talk to that person. I'll take pride in that.

MK: You had a luna when you did the work. How were your relations with the luna?

KI: Yes, there was a luna present. Oh, the luna, he won't get noisy and bother you as long as you do the work. It makes no difference who the luna is.

MK: Were you ever told, "You shouldn't do this" or "You should do this?"

KI: That, he will say. The luna, himself, will see. If he doesn't approve, he will say, "This is no good" or "That is no good." If it is slip-making time, he will say such things as, "Not enough [dead leaves] have been peeled off [from the slip]" or "Too much has been peeled off." In the old days, this [i.e., slip] was no good if too little had been peeled or too much had been peeled. Depending upon the various demands of the job, the luna, too, himself, says so if he sees and feels something is unacceptable.

MK: If he did say something, what do you do?

KI: If he says something, I say, "Oh, is that so?" I be quiet, and I correct it. If I talk back, there'd be an argument. If I just said, "Oruraitto, oruraitto" [All right, all right] in the old days' Hawaiian language, it was okay.

(Laughter)

MK: While packing boxes, what would the luna say?

KI: While packing boxes, it was acceptable as long as the boxes were completely filled. The luna gets noisy when the box is not completely filled. [He says,] "Not enough [pines] have been put in [the box]." If there's even one less pineapple, the box has room inside, and it goes, "Garan, garan" [i.e., sounds of pineapples hitting each other or the inside of the box]. But he rarely says that--the luna. He rarely says anything about taking [unauthorized] breaks. I was rarely told such things while working.

MK: Was the pay at the Fruits Company different for men and women?

KI: Ah, naturally, it was different.

MK: By about how much did it differ?

KI: Well, it was different by about two to three cents in the old days, because pay was cheap, unlike today. The pay was cheap. The women's pay was two to three cents cheaper per hour.

MK: What did you feel about this?

KI: At that time, I thought it was because we were women. So I thought nothing [badly] of it because women were considered cheaper. It was different from today. Today, you take a look. The capable person gets more than a man, right? So, old days, for the people who worked pineapple, it wasn't that way. It was made so that it [pay] was made lower because we were women. But I didn't think anything of it.

MK: Were you always working separately from the men when you packed boxes and made slips?

KI: Yes, yes. Packing boxes, the women, afterwards, came along and packed. The men go ahead and pick fruit.

MK: During lunch, you had lunch with the other two women?

KI: Yes, we ate together.

MK: Were the clothes that you wore the same as the ones you wore at Paumalu?

KI: Uh huh, yes. The clothing was the same.

MK: The equipment was the same, too?

KI: Uh huh [yes].

MK: How about the machinery?

KI: Machinery? Still, at that time, there was no machinery. There still wasn't.

MK: You were also doing laundry work at the time?

KI: Yes, yes. I was also doing laundry work.

MK: When were you doing pine work, and when were you doing laundry work?

KI: When? While staying there, all through that period. Just season time--a lot of pineapple come out, right?--just that season time, I go out and work in the fields.

MK: So in one week, do you go out to the fields every day?

KI: At that time, every day of the week, I would go out to the fields.

MK: When you packed boxes?

KI: Yes, when I packed boxes--every day.

MK: How many weeks did that continue?

KI: In the old days, there was about two months.

MK: At that time, were they administering various chemicals?

KI: At that time, there wasn't too many chemicals--spray chemicals. There was just bone meal [i.e., a substance used as fertilizer].

MK: Laundry work, were you doing that all year?

KI: Yes, all through the year for the four-year period. I was doing it the same way I did it at Waimea.

MK: For about how many people were you doing laundry?

KI: At that time, here, there were not too many. Just four or five people.

MK: How was the pay?

KI: The pay was.... I was receiving it from the Filipinos, so.... At that time, the pay wasn't very different [from the Waimea time]. I think it was \$5 or \$6 because it was old times.

MK: Were you doing laundry work season time?

KI: Yes, season time, I did.

MK: How did you manage to do that?

KI: Well, that Sunday, on Sunday, I washed, and then, at night, I ironed. Sunday night and workday nights, I ironed until I finished all the ironing--every night.

MK: During this time, which did you like better? Laundry work or pineapple work?

KI: Well, to go out and work the field is more comfortable and carefree-- as I said earlier--because I can work leisurely [said with emphasis]. Yes. (Chuckles)

MK: You like that better? Well, I'll end here for today, and next time, I'll continue. So, I think I'll end here.

END OF INTERVIEW



Tape No. 6-21-2-79 and 6-22-2-79

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Kame Iwatani (KI)

March 16, 1979

Kunia, Oahu

BY: Michiko Kodama (MK)

[Note: Interview was conducted in Japanese. Translation done by Michiko Kodama.]

MK: Mrs. Iwatani, today I'll again ask you about the time you were working for the Fruits Company [at Leilehua]. From 1925 to 1929 when you were there, what sorts of things were you receiving at no cost from the company?

KI: I was receiving just the house and water costs for free.

MK: How about the doctor's fees?

KI: The doctor's fees, the company doesn't pay. We must pay all by ourselves.

MK: While working for the Fruits Company, did you always live in the camp?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: Can you describe the camp?

KI: We lived in a single-dwelling house, not in a row house. We stayed in a single-dwelling house.

MK: What kind of housing did the other people have?

KI: Well, the other people, some had single-dwelling houses. But the remaining Filipinos, they all stayed in row houses, partitioned off for individuals.

MK: Why is it that you and Mr. Iwatani occupied a single-dwelling home?

KI: Because my husband was working as a luna. (Laughs)

MK: If your husband was not a luna, what kind of house would you have occupied?

KI: Even if he wasn't a luna, if there was a single-dwelling house

available, they'd let us stay there. If there is no single-dwelling house, we, of course, would have to occupy a row house.

MK: When you become a luna, do you have first choice when it comes to housing?

KI: No, the other side decides. The company decides.

MK: While living in the camp, how did you get along with the people in the camp?

KI: There were no problems. For example, no matter what is said to you in criticism, if you assume you might have been in error at that time, you don't get angry and things go smoothly.

MK: Were there any occasions when you did things together with other camp members? Picnics or other fun-type activities?

KI: While we worked for the Fruits Company, we didn't have activities such as those.

MK: Why is that?

KI: At that place, there weren't that many Japanese. It was all Filipinos. There were only two or three Japanese.

MK: At that time, did the Japanese get together and become friends with other Japanese, and the Filipinos associate with Filipinos?

KI: Well, it wasn't exactly the case. At times when things were done together, the Filipinos participated with the [Japanese] group.

MK: What kinds of things did you do together?

KI: Well, at the Fruits Company, there weren't too many people, and we weren't there too long. In the old days, there weren't activities such as picnics, etc., and there just weren't that many people going [to such activities].

MK: You left Leilehua [i.e., the Fruits Company plantation located there] in 1929. Why did you leave that place?

KI: That place (i.e., the Fruits Company plantation at Leilehua) could no longer continue operating. That is, the company could no longer operate.

MK: Did the company fail [i.e., go bankrupt]?

KI: Yes, yes. The company failed. Fell apart.

MK: After the company failed, what did you and your husband do?

KI: The company failed and the place went bad, so my husband obtained a job at CPC [California Packing Corporation].

MK: How did he get the job?

KI: Well, that, you speak to the boss.

MK: The boss of where?

KI: Leilehua CPC--the boss (of the CPC plantation at Leilehua). The chin boshi (i.e., the person who oversees all the fields, not just one field. He is higher in rank than the luna.) The chin boshi, that is what that person is called. He's not the luna but the chin boshi. That person then talked to the real boss (i.e., the big boss of CPC). At that time, it was an inflationary period [i.e., the Depression], and not many people were needed for pineapple. But that boss had seen my husband at work in the fields and he thought that if it was that fellow [KI's husband], "Let's hire him. Even though we don't need people, let's hire him." So in that way, my husband was hired.

MK: Did Mr. Iwatani get that job because the chin boshi had been watching his work from before?

KI: The big boss--the big boss of CPC--did.

MK: Did the big boss of CPC know about Mr. Iwatani?

KI: He used to see him in the fields.... The fields were lined up alongside each other, so he used to see all the time.

MK: Did they talk to each other from before?

KI: It seems that they had talked to each other previously, and they knew each other.

MK: If your husband had not known that person, could he have gotten the job?

KI: If my husband did not know him, he probably would not have gotten the job. (Laughs)

MK: Why do you say that?

KI: Because it was a time when they did not need workers. It was an inflationary period [i.e., the Depression] then. Even pineapple....they did not pick it, they let it rot.

MK: Is that so?

KI: There was such an inflationary period.

MK: Even season time, they did not pick?

KI: Season time, they picked a little and let the remaining pineapples rot. At the mill [i.e., pineapple cannery], even if they canned

it, they could not sell it. If they could not sell it [canned pineapple], it would be a greater financial loss. So they said, "It was better to let the pineapples rot in the fields." Then, there was a time that pineapple was allowed to rot.

MK: Was that in 1929, when you first got into CPC at Leilehua?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: About how many years did this practice of leaving the pineapples in the fields continue?

KI: That? It didn't last long. It was one year that they had that sort of thing.

MK: At that time, did CPC ever lay off people because of inflation?

KI: At that time, there weren't too many people. They did not employ so many people when it was not season time. When it became season time, they employed more and more. People came around seeking work.

MK: In 1929, when you worked, about how many people were working?

KI: Here? At CPC's Leilehua? Filipinos, there were about 20.

MK: How many Japanese were there?

KI: Japanese? Married people, about 10 or so. I think 10 people-- people from Okinawa prefecture.

MK: Were there Pake people?

KI: At that time, there were no Pake people.

MK: Hawaiians?

KI: No Hawaiians. Only Filipinos.

MK: Mrs. Iwatani, how did you become the cook of the Filipino men at CPC [in 1929]?

KI: Cook? I became the cook of the men I [i.e., KI's husband] employed.

MK: Who was employing the men?

KI: My husband was using the men. He, as a luna, was using them and I cooked for them.

MK: In the beginning, how did you get this job?

KI: The cook's job? Well, on that subject....my husband didn't tell me

much. I think my husband felt that he should feed the men under him, so he talked to the boss about it.

MK: So, Mr. Iwatani asked you to cook?

KI: So he told me that I was to cook, and I started to cook.

MK: For about how many people did you cook?

KI: In the beginning, it was about 12 or 13 people.

MK: In 1939--near the end of the time when you were cooking--for how many people were you cooking?

KI: At the ending time, too. On a regular day, 17 or 18 people. When it becomes season time, there are many.

MK: About how many is that?

KI: At the most plentiful times, there were about 120.

MK: Was that in 1929 or 1939?

KI: I wonder what year that was? That? I don't remember well.

MK: Was there very little change in the numbers of people you fed during the first season time [1929] and the last season time [1939]?

KI: Yes, that's right. It was only during season time that there were 120. At about that time, there is a lot of pineapple, and they hire more and more people.

MK: So, that means that during the 1929 season time, there were about 120 people?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: What kind of work did you do as a cook?

KI: A cook is.... (Laughs) Making obento [Japanese box lunches], providing them with breakfast in the morning--this is the work in the morning. In the evenings, I cook again.... I cook and have it ready for the men by the time they returned. We'd decide on 5:30 [p.m.] and have it ready by that time. To call them to dinner....outside, we had a metal bar hanging, and when we hit it with metal, it rings, "Kan, kan, kan." Then, everybody comes to eat.

MK: For breakfast, when did you prepare it and serve it?

KI: At that place, there was a big pot. CPC constructed (a concrete stove) and provided two to three pots. There, we cooked properly--rice, tsukemono [pickled vegetables], and soup. In the morning, that was all.

- MK: Did the Filipino workers eat that sort of food, too?
- KI: Yes, we eat together.
- MK: For obento [the Japanese box lunches], what types of things did you prepare?
- KI: For obento? Fish was served most because the Filipino workers liked fish. There was fish three times a week. The remaining times, there was egg, meat, that sort of thing--varied things.
- MK: For the daily obento, was each person given the same thing?
- KI: The same thing, yes.
- MK: What sorts of things were made for dinner?
- KI: For dinner? Likewise--meat. The meat was grilled, and then it was properly placed in a plate--a small plate. If it was fish, it was cooked the same way. Meat was served about two times a week. Fish was served about three times a week. The remaining time, there was stew with pork in it, and Pake somen [Chinese noodles]. That sort of thing--cooked tasty soup--that sort of thing about once a week. That's how I was doing it.
- MK: Mrs. Iwatani, were you doing all of the clean-up work?
- KI: (Laughs) Yes, yes. I did the clean-up work. (Laughs)
- MK: If that's so, about how many hours did you spend [on your work]?
- KI: Well....in a day? In one day, cleaning up and doing whatnot---when there were about 15 people [to prepare food for], I used to wake up about 3 o'clock in the morning. From that time on, even at noon, there was no time to rest. It was necessary to do my household tasks, too, and do such things as my laundry. So, I was occupied with that, too.
- MK: Were you working past noon, too?
- KI: Yes, yes. Afternoon, too. In the afternoon I had to make preparations for the obento, and I also had to prepare for feeding them the pau hana dinner. Plus also, there were my household tasks.
- MK: If that's so, when does all your work end?
- KI: For my cook work to be completed, it takes up to 8 o'clock [at night].
- MK: If that's so, on one day, you woke up at 3 o'clock in the morning and was occupied with this work from 3 o'clock to 8 o'clock at night?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: This work, in one week, how many days were you working?

KI: Right through the week without a day off because they eat every day.

MK: If that's so, during the weekend, you don't prepare an obento, and instead, you prepare and serve a lunch?

KI: Yes, yes. Just Sunday. Because long ago, there was work on Saturday, too. Just Sunday. At noon I prepared lunch and served it at home [i.e., at the eating place, not the fields].

MK: To prepare the different types of food daily, how did you think things up?

KI: Me? (Laughs) It was every day, every day, every day [said with emphasis], so it was difficult. What should I make today? What should I make tomorrow? What foods should I make tonight? I thought it over, myself. It is not good to serve the same things every day, right?

MK: So, in the beginning of the week, did you write down that Monday, you'd be serving this thing, and Tuesday, this, and Wednesday, this?

KI: Generally, it was already a set menu. Monday was what; Tuesday was what. If it was not set, it would have been impossible because it was every day.

MK: While working as a cook, did you have helpers?

KI: No, there was none. None at all.

MK: Didn't a person named Kinu Matsuno also help?

KI: Well, I had that person help me during season time when the number of people [who ate] increased to 40. (Once in awhile during season time, that number increased to 120.)

MK: Were there any other helpers?

KI: No. Besides that, just me.

MK: In the cook work, did you, yourself, have to buy the ingredients, etc.?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: How were you buying all the items?

- KI: The store came to take orders because it was the country. There was a store here--in Kunia. From there, about two times a week, they came to take orders. I ordered from there. The fishermen separately came from Waipahu to take orders about three times a week.
- MK: How about the vegetables?
- KI: The vegetables? The vegetable seller generally came. Although we lived in the country, there was no lack of food.
- MK: In this cook work, besides the preparation of foods, you also had to learn how to buy these items, right?
- KI: Because there was a certain number of people, a certain amount of supplies had to be purchased. Even fish. For example, fish....we had to arrange to give a pound of fish for three people. Otherwise, I couldn't calculate [how much was needed]. There were 15 people; I had to buy a certain amount.
- MK: How did you know how to do this?
- KI: There's really no "how"--I just thought it up myself.
- MK: In the beginning, was cook work easy or was it difficult?
- KI: The cook work is not very easy.
- MK: Why is that?
- KI: In cook work, if you steadily served delicious food, you, yourself, have to take a loss. But if you don't feed them [delicious food], you'll be subject to complaints. It is not an easy thing.
- MK: You just mentioned financial loss. How were you paying the cost? How were the Filipino workers paying you?
- KI: The Filipino workers, they were having the company deduct the cost [of the food KI prepared]. So, once a month, I paid the stores. The Filipino workers pay [me]. At that time, it was \$15 a month to eat. Then, from that sum, I paid the stores.
- MK: How was your profit?
- KI: Profit? If you feed them a lot of delicious food, you lose, right? But if you don't feed them [good food], I'd be complained to. So, I really have to economize to feed them.
- MK: For one month, about how much profit were you making?
- KI: A month's profit? If there were many people, I'd make a lot of profit. For instance, if I made a profit of \$3 from each person, if there were many people, I'd profit a lot.



MK: If you compare field pay and cook's pay, which is better?

KI: No, at that time--since all the children were small and I couldn't go out to the field because the children were all small and I was cooking then--it [i.e., cook's pay] was good. Even with inflation, cook's pay was relatively good.

MK: But if you were working in the fields, which job pays better?

KI: Well, if I cook, it is better because the pay at that time was cheap--field pay was cheap then, right?

MK: While you were a cook, was there a boss? A boss supervising your work as a cook?

KI: There was not [a boss].

MK: In your earlier jobs, there was a boss, right? If it was field work. Which is better? Having a boss present or not having a boss?

KI: Not having one is better because it is leisurely. (Laughs)

MK: If you compare the pineapple field work and the cook work, which do you like more?

KI: When I was young, it (i.e., cook work) was good, but the pineapple work is more leisurely than the cook work.

MK: Why is that?

KI: Because there are few responsibilities. As a cook, you're responsible for many people, so the responsibilities are burdensome.

MK: You mean the budgeting, the menu planning, the preparation of the meals so as not to be subject to complaints--was all this burdensome?

KI: Yes, yes. That worry is absent [in the field work]. In the fields, it was all right if you just did your field work. This way is more leisurely.

MK: Did the Filipino workers sometimes complain?

KI: Yes, they say [complaints].

MK: What kind of complaints?

KI: If the food was bad, they said the food was bad and whatnot. They complained. You have to do your job very well to avoid complaints, or else you don't last in this job.

MK: For example, what kind of complaints were they stating?

KI: Complaints.... There weren't too many complaints. When you feed them only things they dislike, they complain.

MK: When there were complaints, were they stated to you directly?

KI: No, they say them behind my back, but I know what they're saying. They say it behind my back, that's why I know.

MK: So, how do you know?

KI: By how they say it; what they're saying now.

MK: All this had no bearing on your husband?

KI: Yes, the cook work had no bearing at all on my husband.

MK: You stopped being a cook in 1939 after a 10-year period. During this 10-year period, were there any changes in your cook work?

KI: No, nothing in particular.

MK: During that 10-year period, were you still cooking with firewood?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: Until 1939, you weren't using electricity or gas then?

KI: There wasn't any.

MK: Why did you stop [cook work] in 1939?

KI: That was [because] employees from the rank of luna and upwards could not engage in business at CPC. At that time, the boss, too. Kunia Store, the boss owned that. If the fish peddler came, it seems that he--the boss--was receiving a "commission." So that became known to the boss at the top. They said that was no good. Employees [from the highest ranks down] until luna could not engage in business, so I quit.

MK: So you were told that you couldn't conduct a business because your husband was a luna?

KI: Yes, yes. That I must not be a cook.

MK: Do you know why all this happened?

KI: That part, I don't know.

MK: What were your feelings, at that time, when you were told that you must not work as a cook?

KI: I was told employees from luna up could not engage in business. So

I felt that there was no way out of it [i.e., KI resigned herself to it] and quit. Then Mrs. Matsuno took over after that because her husband was not a luna. But by that time, the Filipinos quit eating there. There were only about three [Filipinos] about the time I quit.

MK: Why is that?

KI: Well, they started to cook on their own.

MK: In 1939, when the wives of lunas were forbidden to engage in business, was it all right to do laundry work or tend the ofuro?

KI: That was permissible. It wasn't considered a business because it didn't affect the workingmen.

MK: So, cook work and operating a store were not allowed?

KI: Yes, that's so. That was not allowed.

MK: At the time you were a cook, it was a period of depression.

KI: Yes, yes. It was a period of inflation.... It was continuing for a long time.

MK: How did the Depression affect you? Because it was Depression, what did your family do?

KI: Because it was Depression, there was not much pineapple field work, and I, at just about Depression time, was doing cook work.

MK: If you were not a cook at that time, how would that have affected your family budget? If you weren't working?

KI: If I were not working at that time, I probably would have done laundry, or something or other. If I did not cook.

MK: Were there opportunities to do laundry?

KI: Ah, people's? Not at the time I was cooking. There was none. But that laundry--there wasn't too much of the Filipinos' laundry because the Filipinos did their own. Laundry was brought from Schofield [Barracks], and laundry was being done.

MK: Oh, was there laundry from Schofield [Barracks] prior to the beginning of the war [i.e., World War II]?

KI: Yes, yes. I would have done that type of work.

MK: In 1939, you started field work at CPC's Leilehua?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: Why did you again continue this type of work?

KI: Me? After I quit cook work, without working I cannot send my children to school, right? (Laughs) Right? There were six children, so with the earnings of just one person [i.e., KI's husband], that's not enough. So I couldn't just stay at home and play. Field work was better than laundry. This [i.e., field work] was leisurely, too. Field work is leisurely and carefree. As long as you do the work, you're not told noisy things by the boss.

MK: But in laundry work, you don't have a boss.

KI: Yes, you do it yourself. But field work is still more leisurely and carefree in comparison to laundry work. Laundry is not easy work.

MK: How did you get the job? This field work?

KI: Field work is all set, so the same thing is done over, and over again. [KI may have misheard the question as, "How did you learn the job?"]

MK: Did you get the job by applying to the boss?

KI: Yes, yes. That's how. You have to apply to get a job.

MK: How did you apply?

KI: "I would like to do some work" is how you apply.

MK: Did you go to see him directly?

KI: No, my husband went. I didn't have much of an opportunity to see the boss. The boss rarely comes to the field. He's always in the office. And then I went to a physical examination. If your body is healthy, they give you work.

MK: What kind of examination was it?

KI: The body. The whole body is examined--whatever. They examine you, and if there are no physical problems, work is given. If you are sick, work is not given.

MK: Was it easy or hard to get a job?

KI: Oh, it was easy. It was easy getting the job.

MK: How many days did it take? Did you go there and get the job immediately?

KI: You get the job immediately. Yes.

MK: At this time, when you went out to the fields, you had not done

this type of work for 10 years. What were your feelings returning to the field work after a 10-year absence?

KI: I had no particular feelings, but I felt I had to work no matter what. When I came from Japan, I came with the intention to work, so I didn't think anything of working [i.e., it was no big thing], regardless of the type of work.

MK: Was the work difficult or easy when you returned to it?

KI: It was easy. There were no particularly different or new things to do.

MK: Did you get used to the work quickly?

KI: Yes, yes. (Laughs)

MK: At that time, what kind of work did you do in the pineapple field?

KI: At the pineapple field, it was weeding. It was mainly weeding at that time.

MK: Weeding? And besides that, what other work?

KI: Picking planting material. At the time that pineapple matures, [I picked pineapple].

MK: In preparing planting material, were you doing it the same way as the Paumalu time?

KI: I was doing it the same way at that time.

MK: In 1939, you were still peeling the dried bottom leaves from the slip? [This practice was later discontinued by the pineapple plantations.]

KI: Yes, we were still peeling.

MK: How were you peeling it?

KI: We were just peeling just a little from the slip--the dead leaves. Then we piled it [i.e., slips] in a mound here, counted it, then stood it up and dried it.

MK: Did you also pick pineapple fruits?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: Did you ever do that before?

KI: Yes.

MK: How did you pick?

KI: Pull the pineapple [from the plant] by holding the crown. Then by holding the pineapple with one hand and by tapping the crown with your other hand, the crown will drop off easily.

MK: How do you select the pineapple while picking?

KI: By just looking, the color. In the beginning, it's green. Then it turns yellow. They tell you to pick the ones that are half-yellow and half-green. You have a round one [i.e., pineapple], and this part is yellow [i.e., bottom half of the pine is yellow]. The half-yellow one is called, "half-ripe." The half-yellow one is picked. There is also the full-ripe one. It is yellow up to the crown.

MK: The luna tells you which one to pick [i.e., half-ripe ones or full-ripe ones]?

KI: Yes. It is told to you in the morning when you go to work--when you begin to work that day. "Today is half-ripe." "Today is full-ripe."

MK: Do you select just by color?

KI: It cannot be helped, so it [pineapple] is selected by color alone.

MK: How about the sound?

KI: There is no time to tap and listen to the sound. Only when we pick, just a few do we tap and listen to the pineapple.

MK: Were you still packing pineapple into [lug] boxes after picking them back then?

KI: Yes. It was packed.

MK: So, there was also that work? So, besides hoe-hana, preparing slips, picking pineapple, and packing boxes, were there other jobs?

KI: Besides that, we didn't do. It was about that. That, we repeated and repeated.

MK: Was there fertilizer?

KI: There was fertilizer called bone meal. Powdered thing. It was put on the pineapple as you walked.

MK: Did you do that?

KI: Yes, I did that.

MK: What sort of tools were you using in each of these jobs?

KI: In a bucket. If it's half a bucket, half a bucket, or one bag. There is [a row of] 25 yards. There is double the 25 yards--you walk through once and return. You measure the bone meal in the bucket. Put in a bag; you make the bag; you hang the bag here [in front] and walk and distribute the bone meal, little by little. It is not good if you run out of the bone meal or if you are still left with some of the bone meal after doing a row and returning. It [fertilizer] is measured so that the same amount is distributed in a row. There should be no shortage or leftover fertilizer per row.

MK: When you picked pineapple, did you use a knife?

KI: In the beginning, a knife was used.

MK: How was the knife used?

KI: To take off the top [i.e., crown]. Only in the beginning, it was all knife.

MK: Why did they discontinue that?

KI: With the knife, you overcut the fruit. You overcut the pineapple. You cut it, and the skin hemos. Then, by the time you pack a lot and take it to the mill [i.e., cannery], the juice is gone. So, they thought about it and started crown removal by the hand. That way [i.e., by hand], work is faster, too.

MK: In talking to others, I've heard that the ratoon crop is easier to work with.

KI: Oh, it's not easy. It's hard to pick. The first crop is easier.

MK: Is the picking of the pine, or crown removal easy?

KI: In the crown removal, it is harder to do the second crop [i.e., ratoon crop]. The first crop is easier. For picking pineapple, the first crop is easier.

MK: Why is that?

KI: The pineapple fruit in the first crop is all standing up properly...

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: You were saying that the first crop was easy to work with? In what way was it easy?

- KI: If it's the first crop, the top sort of sticks out. So it's easy to pick, and if you hit it with this hand, it [the top] falls off easily even if you don't put in that much strength.
- MK: When you pick the pineapples, too....
- KI: When you pick the pineapples, too, it is easy. Because the pineapple is standing.
- MK: So, do you prefer working with the first crop rather than the second crop?
- KI: Yes, that is so.
- MK: For each of these jobs, how were you receiving your pay?
- KI: If it's hoe-hana, it's cheap. I received pay by the time [i.e., hourly]. If it's [picking] pineapple work, and at the times there was a lot of it, it was contract [i.e., piecework]. The amount you received depended on the contract. If it was contract for the first crop or contract for the second crop, the amount paid differed because naturally, the work was difficult [on the second crop].
- MK: How about preparing planting material?
- KI: Preparing planting material was the same thing. Preparing planting material was all contract.
- MK: How about packing [pineapples] in the boxes?
- KI: This packing in the boxes was combined together with the picking of pineapple. You picked the pineapples yourself, then placed it in the box. It's set so that one box is worth so much. If it's 2 cents, it's 2 cents. It's set that way.
- MK: How about fertilizing?
- KI: Oh, when we give fertilizer, of course, it is not contract [i.e., piecework] but by the time [i.e., hourly].
- MK: If you compare piecework with hourly pay, which is better?
- KI: When I do contract [i.e., piecework], contract is better because I earn more.
- MK: But if your hands are slow...
- KI: If your hands are slow, you don't earn much. Naturally, there are slow people and fast people. The slow people calculate how much they'd make on contract [i.e., piecework]. The people who don't make contract [i.e., make as much as, or more than the total hourly pay for the day] received daywork pay [i.e., pay for the day].



MK: So, there are no times that a person actually loses out?

KI: Yes, there is no such time. There is no time that a person would lose daywork pay [whether the person is on daywork or piecework] no matter how badly you do.

MK: When you received pay on contract, did you have to hurry and work?

KI: Yes, I rushed and worked, sweating. (Laughs)

MK: Even if you have to rush and work, is contract better?

KI: With contract, you can make more money, so contract is better. Yes. (Laughs)

MK: In 1939, what sorts of machinery were you using?

KI: Nineteen thirty-nine, at CPC, it wasn't horsepower to plow the fields. To plow, they used all machines.

MK: How about the harvester, it didn't...

KI: The harvester was still not used.

MK: In 1939 when you worked, did you learn any new things? Working techniques?

KI: In pineapple, there wasn't anything in particular. There was nothing different.

MK: But in working with different people, did someone ever say, "If you do it this way, it's easier?"

KI: Yes, there was. That, at CPC, if you think of a good thing-- something that will make the work simpler, better--for those who think up those things, the company used to give out rewards, money. But I didn't have the kind of brains to think of such things. (Laughs) They did it that way.

MK: Is that so? Did you ever learn of some ways to make the work easier? Did you think up ways yourself?

KI: Yes. I used to think to myself that if it was done this way or that. There are some pineapples that don't live too long in the fields even if the fields are good. Yet these pineapples aren't even rotting either. I used to think that if these were watered more, the pineapples would live. I used to say this to myself and work, but I didn't say anything. (Laughs) I felt it wouldn't do any good even if I said something.

MK: In 1939, who were you working with?

KI: It was with Matsuno-san and others.

MK: Do you remember all of their names?

KI: All of them.... In 1939 at that time, Oshiro-san, Miyashiro-san, Irei-san, etc. There were many Okinawa-ken people.

MK: With about how many people were you working?

KI: Among the women, about 10 people.

MK: Were you working with the 10 women all the time?

KI: Yes, I was working with them all the time.

MK: Did you ever work with the men?

KI: Mixing with the men, just about pineapple picking time. That was about it at that time.

MK: While picking pineapples and working with the men, what were your feelings on this?

KI: I had no particular feelings about it. I felt it made no difference because all you had to do was your own work. You were not being paid on the basis of how you did as a group. Even if you worked together, all you had to do was your share.

MK: But men work faster, right? Did women at any time feel that they had to work faster, too?

KI: Yes, that [feeling], there was.

MK: What did you do then?

KI: That was a pineapple picking time and.... Peeling planting material, women were faster than men. They're faster.

MK: When you compare the times when you were working with men, and the times you were working with women, how do they differ?

KI: That feeling doesn't change. Always if you do your work, that's okay. Whether it's with men or with women, my feelings about work do not differ.

MK: Did the speed [of work] change?

KI: The speed, if it's contract, it doesn't change. Everybody's about the same.

MK: What kind of person was the luna at that time?

KI: My husband was the luna.

MK: Is that unusual?

KI: For me, it made no difference.

MK: How was Mr. Iwatani as a luna? Was he a good luna, a bad luna?

KI: (Laughs) A luna is someone there to make you work, right? Since he's there to make you work, to the workers, he seems not to be too good. In that thinking, it's so, right? To the company, the luna that makes you work is a good luna, right? So, for the workers, since he [KI's husband] made them work, he was not very well-liked.

MK: Did Mr. Iwatani make you and the other women do all sorts of work?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: Was Mr. Iwatani ever harder on you or easier on you?

KI: No, the same thing. The same thing to everyone.

MK: Since it was known that the luna was your husband, did people ever make any comments about that?

KI: Ah, there wasn't any in particular.

MK: Can you tell me about your typical workday of that time? When you woke up, what you did after you woke up, and what you did after that?

KI: In one day, I woke up at about 4 o'clock [a.m.]. Cooked, made obento. Then, I took it [obento] and went out.

MK: Where did you go? Where do you all gather together?

KI: The gathering place is in the front of the [plantation] office. We all congregated together. Since work is at 7 o'clock [a.m.], we meet at 6:30. We gather together, then work. A trucker then comes and takes us away.

MK: Before the truck arrives, what is the luna doing?

KI: Before it comes, the luna does not do anything. When we get on the truck, then we're the luna's responsibility.

MK: What does the luna say?

KI: While we're on the trucks, he doesn't say a thing. When we get to the field, he says something.

MK: What sorts of things does he say?

KI: [The luna says,] "Today, you'll be doing this sort of work." Depending upon the work. If it's hoe-hana, it's hoe-hana. "Today,

you pick this type of planting material. Today, you pick this type of pineapple." He says that before we start working.

MK: You begin your work that way, and what time do you end working?

KI: You work until 11 [a.m.], and it becomes lunch time. Until 11:30. Thirty minutes make up the kaukau time. From 11:30, you again start working and do it until 5:00 [p.m.].

MK: During lunch time, what did you do?

KI: At lunch time, we just eat together. We sit around there and eat all together.

MK: What sorts of things did you talk about?

KI: We talk about different things we've read. Whatever we could think of. Then we ate our lunches, and people who wanted to rest, rested, and people who wanted to talk, talked.

MK: Was it at that time that Mitsuyuki-san slept?

KI: (Laughs) That person used to spread out her apron often and go to sleep. (Laughs)

MK: When did working hours become just eight hours?

KI: Eight hours? That was since the union [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] came in [1946].

MK: During season time, did you work every day?

KI: Season time, yes. During season time, you work every day.

MK: Is just Sunday the day off?

KI: Yes, Sunday is the day off, but when it's really busy--when you just have [said with emphasis] to work--we used to work on Sunday, too.

MK: When it's not season time, how much do you work?

KI: At that time, when it's not season time, there was work up through Saturday.

MK: Daily?

KI: Yes, daily.

MK: Even if it is not season time?

KI: Yes.

MK: So, there are no one-month, or one-week, or two-week layoff periods?

KI: There were none.

MK: At that time, were men's pay and women's pay different?

KI: Yes. Men's and women's pay, they differed.

MK: What did you think about that difference?

KI: I thought, well, I was a woman, so.... Men and women are different, so I thought it was because I was a woman. But when I worked with the men and did the same work as the men, I received the same pay. When I picked pineapples or distributed bone meal, those times I received daywork, same as the men's.

MK: On contract [i.e., piecework], it didn't differ?

KI: On contract, if you do more, you receive more pay.

MK: But if you pick, say, a hundred pineapples, and a man picks a hundred pineapples, did you both receive the same pay?

KI: The same. It's the same.

MK: Were the Japanese, the Filipinos, and other ethnic groups still receiving the same pay?

KI: Yes, they were still receiving the same pay.

MK: What were your feelings about work at this time?

KI: My feelings about this work didn't change.

MK: Did you have any likes or dislikes about the work?

KI: You mean the working people? You mean the work? Oh, nothing in particular. I never felt that, "Oh, today is this type of work, so I don't want to do it."

MK: In about 1941, you started working at CPC's Kunia plantation. Why did you move to Kunia?

KI: My husband, Mr. Iwatani, was transferred to Kunia, so we moved here.

MK: What were your feelings when you moved from Leilehua?

KI: Since I lived at Leilehua for a long time, I, of course, really did not want to move.

MK: Why is that?

- KI: Even if it's still CPC [plantation], until then, we had always lived in the country. Even now, we're in the country, but the place that we had stayed longer was better, right?
- MK: When Mr. Iwatani transferred to Kunia, was he the only one, or did other people transfer, too?
- KI: It was just us at that time.
- MK: Why was Mr. Iwatani transferred?
- KI: To Kunia? I don't think there was any particular reason.
- MK: When you moved to Kunia, how did you get a job?
- KI: Kunia and Leilehua camps are the same. The boss is the same. It was just a matter of transferring. The work continues.
- MK: In 1941, only four of you women remained as workers. Why is that?
- KI: That's because everyone went to do laundry work. At laundry, the money received was bigger. For example, if you receive about a dollar [\$1] here, the laundry was giving out \$1.50. So, everyone went to laundry work at that time.
- MK: But why did you remain?
- KI: We were at CPC. CPC needed people. At that time, all the men left as servicemen, right? So there were not enough men. Schoolchildren from even Hilo came during the season time. During season time, many came from Hilo. So many tens of people came. CPC needed people, so I was asked, "Iwatani-san, aren't you going [to laundry work]?" I said I wasn't going. I didn't go. So finally, just the four of us women remained.
- MK: Why did you remain?
- KI: I felt that CPC needed people, too. I said, "Even though the money's bigger elsewhere, I wouldn't go. I'll work here." That's how I felt, and I worked here.... Humans have feelings of compassion.
- MK: In 1941, World War II had started. During the war, what kinds of work were you doing?
- KI: It was the same thing.
- MK: Was there anything different or new during that time?
- KI: In work? In pineapple? Nothing in particular changed.
- MK: Who were you working with?
- KI: At that time, I was working with my husband....even during the war.

MK: But at that time, there weren't that many men, right?

KI: There weren't that many. During season time, the students all came out. The teachers came, and the teachers were the lunas. They sat on the pineapple boxes, (Laughs) and put up umbrellas, and served as lunas that way. The schoolteachers were doing that. It's true.

(Laughter)

KI: Today, a certain number of people from a certain school. It was set so every week, every day, they came.

MK: During the war, was it scary to work outdoors?

KI: Yes. After the war started, we had these knives to remove large weeds because we couldn't remove the weeds with our hoes. When we had these knives, the soldiers came to the fields and asked, "What are you doing with the knives?" During the war, we didn't work for about two weeks, too. Didn't work at the time the war started. The company did not let us work. They made us stay home for two weeks.

MK: Did the company give a reason for that?

KI: No. They didn't say anything in particular.

MK: During the war, did the sirens sound off in this area?

KI: Yes. There was the [air raid] siren on this side. The sirens sounded even at night. When it was wartime, we dug a big puka, all of us, so that we could go in. There are times when I went in there.

MK: Where was this puka located?

KI: In our own yards. We dug that.

MK: What happened when the sirens sounded while you were in the fields?

KI: We ran home. Yes.

(Laughter)

MK: You didn't hide out there in the fields?

KI: There wasn't anyplace to hide, so when the sirens sounded in the field, everyone ran, and ran, and ran home.

MK: During wartime, were you planting other items besides pineapple?

KI: We were planting lima beans.

MK: Did you work in the lima bean fields?

KI: Yes, I went picking lima beans. You pick it. You just walk along and pick from the plants bearing beans. Then you gather all the beans together.

MK: If you compare this with pineapple work, which do you like better?

KI: Well, which is better? I never really thought that pineapple work was better, or that this work was better.

MK: Why were they planting lima beans?

KI: For eating purposes. Just in case we ran out of foodstuffs.

MK: The company would give it to the workers?

KI: Yes. The workers could eat it, too, I guess. Potatoes. A little bit of the potatoes were grown, too.

MK: How were working hours during the wartime?

KI: The hours, they were the same. At that time, it was still 10 hours.

MK: Since there were only a few men, did your workload [i.e., responsibilities] increase?

KI: Yes, yes. Since there weren't men around, we women did all sorts of things at that time. At that time, we planted and we sprayed [insecticides] from a pipe that we carried. Until that time, we never did that sort of work.

MK: How did you plant?

KI: There's a paper laid down on the ground. In the old days, there was no paper laid on the ground. But at that time, there was paper. On the paper, there were marks. You punch a hole through the mark and stick the planting material in there.

MK: Was that work hard for you?

KI: Oh, this job was difficult.

MK: Why is that?

KI: My back aches so much. You can't plant unless you bend at the waist.

MK: Was that job by contract?

KI: Oh, if that job was on contract, I would have never made it [financially]. So, it was by time [i.e., hourly wage].

MK: All the women were doing that work?



KI: Yes. (Laughs)

MK: How about the children?

KI: Children couldn't do that kind of work.

MK: You said that you were also spraying?

KI: Yes, we were also spraying to put a gas on the pineapples. You hold a pipe connected to a truck and spray the plants with chemicals as you walk.

MK: Was that work difficult?

KI: This wasn't a very difficult job. All you had to do was carry the pipe and spray the chemicals.

MK: Was the spraying of chemicals dangerous?

KI: No, no. Nothing like that.

MK: How were you receiving pay for that work?

KI: By the time [i.e., hourly wage].

MK: At that time, were you a full time worker?

KI: Yes, I was working as an all-year-round worker.

MK: Were all the other women working all year-round, too?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: Who was the luna at that time?

KI: The luna at that time, who was he? I think he was called, "Cabral." Cabral, I think we were calling him. Now he's already passed away.

MK: What kind of luna was he?

KI: He wasn't a bad luna. Even if you say that the luna was bad or the luna was good, if you do your work, the luna does not say noisy things to you. If you do the work expected of you.

MK: Was the pay for men and women still different at that time [i.e., World War II]?

KI: Men's pay and women's pay differed depending on the work.

MK: Could you explain that to me?

KI: Hoe-hana is number one work. Here, the work numbers go from the lowest up to number six. Hoe-hana is number one, the lowest. Bone

meal spraying, pineapple picking are number two. Number two is about five cents [more] per hour [than number one]. You receive about five cents more per hour as you go up [i.e., to different labor grades]. (The higher labor grades are jobs that involve the operation of heavy machinery.)

MK: So, pay differs according to work. But do men and women still receive the same pay if it's the same job?

KI: Yes, yes. If you do the same job, you receive the same pay.

MK: When you compare pre-war time and wartime, how was your work different?

KI: Pre-war and wartime, there's nothing in particular that changed.

MK: When the war ended, what kind of changes were there from 1945 to 1950?

KI: In the pineapple, the things that changed included the machine [i.e., harvester], and to spray, we just used the machine then. To distribute bone meal, too, they didn't do it by hand. They mixed it with water and sprayed it. That was about it that changed.

MK: Since the harvester came in, how did your work change?

KI: With the machine, it's still the same. The only difference is that I don't have to carry [the bags of pineapples] on my back. In the old days, there was a big, square bag. You had to carry that, place the pineapples in that, and come out [of the rows] carrying that on the back. With the machine, you have the machine in front of you. So you follow, pick the pineapple, and put it in [the boom attached to the truck].

MK: Were you removing tops [i.e., crowns] then?

KI: Yes.

MK: Where were you removing the tops?

KI: When you pick the pineapple and hit it, "pon" [the sound of pineapples being hit against the metal]. Since there is all metal in front of you [on the boom], the top falls off easily.

MK: You hit the pineapple against the metal around the boom area?

KI: Yes, yes.

MK: Did the work go faster?

KI: Yes, it was fast.

MK: You walk after the machine [i.e., harvester] and follow, right? Was the machine always going at the same speed?

KI: If there were a lot of pineapples, it didn't go fast. When there were a few pineapples, it went fast. When there's a lot of pineapples, we have to pick here and there because we have to pick to the left and right of our bodies. So the machine cannot go fast when it goes to places with many pineapples. When there are only a few pineapples, we walk quickly and easily through the field.

MK: Was the speed just about right?

KI: Yes, it was okay. It's leisurely to pick pineapples with a harvester, but it's very, very tiring when there are many pineapples to pick.

MK: In areas where the harvester cannot go, how were the pineapples picked?

KI: In the pali areas, we have to carry it [pineapples] on our backs.

MK: Does the pay differ when you pick with the machine, and when you pick with the bags only?

KI: No, it does not differ because it's still pineapple picking.

MK: When the harvester came in, was there still the job of packing pineapples in the boxes?

KI: No, when the machine came in, that job was not being done. All of the pineapples went into a large box instead. Even when we occasionally picked pineapples with the bag.

MK: When the company changed over to machine spraying of chemicals, did the job of spraying by hand also end?

KI: Yes, that job ended.

MK: Who operated the new spraying machine?

KI: The men did. On the trucks. Because the spray is connected to the trucks.

MK: The men were also spraying the liquified bone meal mixture?

KI: Yes.

MK: So, two jobs were phased out?

KI: Yes, yes. That's so.

MK: In 1946, the union [ILWU] came in. At about what time did you get to know about the union?

KI: We [KI and the other women workers at CPC] did not join the union for awhile after the union came in. Just us, women folk, did not join the union.

MK: Why?

KI: There's really not much of a "why." But the union did not make a special effort or anything to recruit us, and we didn't join. There were only four of us, but in the end, the union from their side, asked us to join. A person who takes care of union matters came, and then, I joined.

MK: What did you think when you were asked to join the union?

KI: I didn't have any particular thoughts on it. They asked us to join, and I answered, "If all of us [the four women] are going to join together, let's join."

MK: Did all of the women meet and discuss it?

KI: Yes, yes. So....

MK: What sort of things were discussed?

KI: Well, when we have to join the union, we have to. We talked. Someone from the union came to the houses, too. [We said], "If everyone's going to join, let's join." And the union person went from house to house.

MK: Why was it decided that all of you would join?

KI: The work's all the same [as the union members], so we felt maybe it's better to join.

MK: In 1947, there was the first [industry-wide] pineapple strike. Can you tell me what you were doing?

KI: Even when they had meetings, I didn't go. I just stayed at home. At that time, a union person, or at least I think it was a union person that came to my house, said that he was a book seller. Since I don't understand English, my daughter happened to be home, and she told me that the man had come to sell books. But he talked about the union, so I thought he must be a union representative. He [supposedly] came to sell books, but he asked me, "Is the union good?" So, at that time, I thought he was a union representative.

So I said, "The union is good. The union is good, but strike is no good. Pineapple company and sugar company are different."

He just said, "Is that so?" So, at that time, we were supposed to receive a \$100 bonus, but because we were striking, we couldn't receive the \$100.

And I said, "We won't be able to send our children to school." I said that. (Laughs)

MK: So during the strike, you just stayed at home?

KI: We just stayed at home because we were women.

MK: What was Mr. Iwatani doing then?

KI: He was not a member of the union.

MK: Because he was a luna?

KI: Because he was a luna. Here, lunas cannot be members of the union.

MK: When you joined the union, what did Mr. Iwatani think about it?

KI: He didn't say a word. He didn't say anything in particular. I didn't say too much, either. Just, "Oh, today, the union said this and that." That was about it.

MK: When you compare pre-union time and union times, what sorts of things changed?

KI: Well, mostly the pay rate. The pay rate changed, and the medical benefits steadily changed. Other than that, it's mainly the pay rate.

MK: After the union came in, how did the pay change?

KI: Every year, the union would say, "Raise the pay by a certain amount this year."

Then the company would say, "We can raise it only so much." Then it is decided. For example, if the raise was 50 cents per hour, the company would raise the pay in about two steps during the year. In the beginning, the contract was for three years. At the end, the contract was for two years. Even nowadays, it's for two years, I think. Even CPC, they won't give you a raise in one step. They'll give you the raise in two or three steps.

END OF SIDE TWO

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MK: After the union came in, how did, say, house rentals and medical benefits change?

KI: After the union came, house things didn't change that much.

MK: But before, wasn't your house rent free?

KI: Yes. When the union came in, the pay got higher, so they started to take rent, little by little. But at CPC, the rent hasn't been increased too much. Now, and then, it's the same.

MK: You were saying something about the water bill?

KI: The water bill depends on the size of the house. If it's a large house, they give you a large water allotment. If it's a small house, they give you a little less. When you use over the allotted amount, you have to pay.

MK: How about doctors' fees?

KI: It's called, "Medical [insurance]." They have that.

MK: Before the union, if you got sick, was there a CPC doctor you could go to?

KI: There was a doctor assigned by CPC, but we had to put out the money ourselves.

MK: Was that doctor's fees cheaper than elsewhere?

KI: No, there wasn't anything like that.

MK: What sort of things did CPC provide free?

KI: At CPC, there were not many free things provided for family use. From before, they didn't have.

MK: Before the union came in, if you had any work grievances, could you go to someone?

KI: Yes, there's a union boss. A person who handles those matters is assigned here. If you tell that person, he goes to the union, right?

MK: But before the union, was there a person like him?

KI: Before the union, we didn't have that.

MK: Have you ever gone to a union person [with a grievance]?

KI: Us? We haven't, we haven't.

MK: Do you think it is good to have such a person?

KI: Without the union, the company would proceed along to make as much profit as possible. Before the union, it was that way. To get money [better pay], it's good to have the union. (Chuckles)

MK: From 1950 to 1961, were there new or different things in your work?

KI: Nothing in particular changed in this pineapple work.

MK: The machine wasn't changed at all?

KI: They were not changed from before.

MK: How about the work?

KI: Well, the work, a Japanese luna used to say, "You have to do more work than before, and you can't be slow."

MK: Why?

KI: Because the daily pay is high. The company cannot survive unless they make the people work harder.

MK: Was this talk about before you retired [1961]?

KI: No, this talk was about after I retired.

MK: How were things before you retired?

KI: Before, we were working just as usual. Not particularly more work--we were getting by with the work we were doing.

MK: From 1950 to 1961, how long were the working hours?

KI: It was eight hours. Lunch time was the same [i.e., 30 minutes].

MK: By 1961, you had been working about 40 years. Did the clothing styles for work change?

KI: Clothing, in the beginning, we sewed and wore our own tabis made from ahina. But some people would drop their knives and injure themselves. So they [i.e., CPC] said tabis were not permissible. And then they said, "Wear shoes." Then in the beginning, we wore hakama, slacks, and shirts. They said that was no good, so we started wearing pants--all of us wore pants.

MK: How about goggles?

KI: Net goggles, we had them from the start--from the time we were at CPC Leilehua. You must use that, or you'll get poked [by the pineapple thorns]. The pineapple leaves are sprayed with chemicals, and if it touches you in the eye, you can go blind. Eyes, you have to protect them, and we were made to wear these net goggles.

MK: In 1961, why did you retire?

KI: Me? Because I made 65 years of age. I retired because I made 65.

MK: Why didn't you retire earlier?

KI: Before? Even if I retired earlier, there were really no jobs around here. I thought I'd work until I retired.

MK: Before you retired, you worked as a maid, right?

KI: That was way before.

MK: From when were you doing housework?

KI: It was during the wartime. It was during wartime.

MK: Whose house were you cleaning?

KI: A haole's house. Because he was the boss of this place [Kunia].

MK: How did you get that job?

KI: From the other [i.e., employer's] side. It was once a week. The boss asked me to come and do housework. The trucker took me from here and brought me home.

MK: In housework, what do you do?

KI: I just housecleaned.

MK: What were your hours?

KI: From 7 [o'clock a.m.] to 3:30, I did that.

MK: While you were working at the boss's house, the boss's wife said something about the four of you women workers, right?

KI: Yes, about the four of us.

MK: Tell me about that.

KI: Since we didn't go to do laundry work and remained here, in thanks for that: "These four, no matter what happens, can never be laid off until they retired." And the company kept us until we retired.

MK: If that wife and boss did not say that, what would have happened?

KI: If that boss didn't think that way, when all of the women were laid off, I think we would have been laid off, too.

MK: When did they lay off the women?

KI: I don't mean they were laid off. They--all on their own--went to work laundry. So even when they returned, they [i.e., CPC] didn't use them. At this CPC, it's the same for men even now. When a person leaves CPC to work elsewhere, they never employ him again, no matter what kind of person he is.

MK: In 1961, were you and the other three women the only full time women workers?

KI: Yes, the four of us. There were no others [women] who were full timers. They didn't hire and keep them from that time.



- MK: Since you retired, which is better--retirement or working?
- KI: Retirement is so leisurely and carefree, retirement is much better.  
(Laughs)
- MK: Since you've worked from 1923 to 1961, what are your feelings about having worked in the pineapple fields?
- KI: When I think about it now, I think that there were cold times, and times that it rained. Even if it rained, you couldn't go home unless everyone was going home. While I'm in the house nowadays, I think, "Gee, even on days that it rained, I worked and came through all that." (Laughs)
- MK: If your husband had not been working for the pineapple company, do you think you would have started this work?
- KI: Gee, if my husband was not in pineapple, I don't think that I'd be in pineapple either.
- MK: If your husband did not work pineapple, would you like to have done something else?
- KI: I never had that desire to do so.
- MK: When you think about the past 40 years, do you think about it as a good life?
- KI: Well, I don't think it was too bad a life. I think it's good that I came to Hawaii. (Laughs)
- MK: Why?
- KI: If I were in Japan now, I believe I might be dead. I think it's good that I came to Hawaii. Hawaii has a good climate. You can earn money if you work, and there's really no suffering.
- MK: You were saying that before you came to Hawaii, you wanted to earn some money and give your children the education that you never had. Were you able to do this?
- KI: Yes, I sent them to college as long as they could handle it [academically].
- MK: When you were working, who took care of the children?
- KI: While I was working, I took care of the children. I came home, did the laundry on Sundays, did the ironing at night, and did it all like that.
- MK: When the children got older, did they help you?

KI: Yes, they helped. They did some of the housecleaning, the ironing. Sundays, they did laundry. When they were older, they helped.  
(Laughs)

MK: While working, you probably didn't get to spend as much time with your children since you were working, and they were in school. What were your feelings on this?

KI: The children all went to school, and then they went to Japanese [language] school. So they came home later than I did. All of them. The children were never lonely. They never came home to an empty house, because the children were later. If the children came home earlier, and I was not there, they would be very lonely. But that never happened, because the children never came home until about 5 o'clock after Japanese school.

MK: When the children were very young and you were working, did you take care of them?

KI: When they were very young, I was a cook, so I was at home. So, there was no problem there. <sup>389</sup> When I started to work [in the fields], the children were older and in school. Since the children were close in age, they all went to school together. The six of them sat along a long table and studied together. (Laughs)

MK: After the children graduated, what were your expectations for the children?

KI: <sup>399</sup> Me? Even the boss here said to me, "If you make the children study that hard, it will be so that they won't hoe-hana."

I said, "I don't want them to hoe-hana. That's why I make them study." For those who passed the test for college and got in, I sent them to college. The oldest brother went to business school because he said he wanted to go to business school. He went to business school for half a year, then the war [World War II] started. Since there was no gasoline, he couldn't get to Wahiawa from here, so he quit. And the rest, three of them went to college. Michiko and Tsuneto didn't pass the test. The war had just ended, and all the people who came out of the war went to college, so he didn't have a chance. He, the boy, went to vocational school. Michiko, I asked if she wanted to be a nurse. She said no, she didn't want to be a nurse. She also said she didn't want to be a dressmaker. She said she would be a beautician. She went to school in Honolulu, and she has been a beautician.

MK: Among your children, is there anyone working in pine?

KI: Just my son.

MK: What are your thoughts on that?

- KI: I told him to go for more schooling, but he said he wouldn't go. So I felt there was nothing I could do. Since we were in pineapple at that time, I asked, "What are you going to do?" He said he'd work in pineapple. At that time, I told him, "Some boys work pineapple and leave before the work is done, or they stay home often, or complain that this work is hard or that work is bad. Some boys say that, but you must never say that. If you want to work in pine, no matter what type of work--giving bone meal, hoe-hana, or whatever--you must not leave work and come home." So, he's never rested from work, saying, "Oh, today, I'm tired."
- MK: I'm moving away from the topic of family and will move on to the topic of friends now. Among your friends, were most of them pineapple workers?
- KI: Yes, that's so. When I was with the pineapple people, we talked about the old days--about how we worked.
- MK: Is it very nostalgic for you?
- KI: Yes, but a lot of people who worked pineapple have passed away. A lot of people used to come from Wahiawa because they used to commute to work during season time. Many of them had come from Japan like myself. Usually our ages were about the same.
- MK: I don't know how long the pineapple industry will continue, but what are your thoughts on the future of the pineapple companies?
- KI: If it continues as it is today, it'll be okay. They make a lot of profit nowadays. They have fresh fruits. They put it out raw. And nowadays, the harvest of pineapple is about three times greater than before. If pineapple continues this way, it'll be okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

**WOMEN WORKERS  
in Hawaii's  
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**Volume I**

**ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**Ethnic Studies Program  
University of Hawaii, Manoa**

**June 1979**